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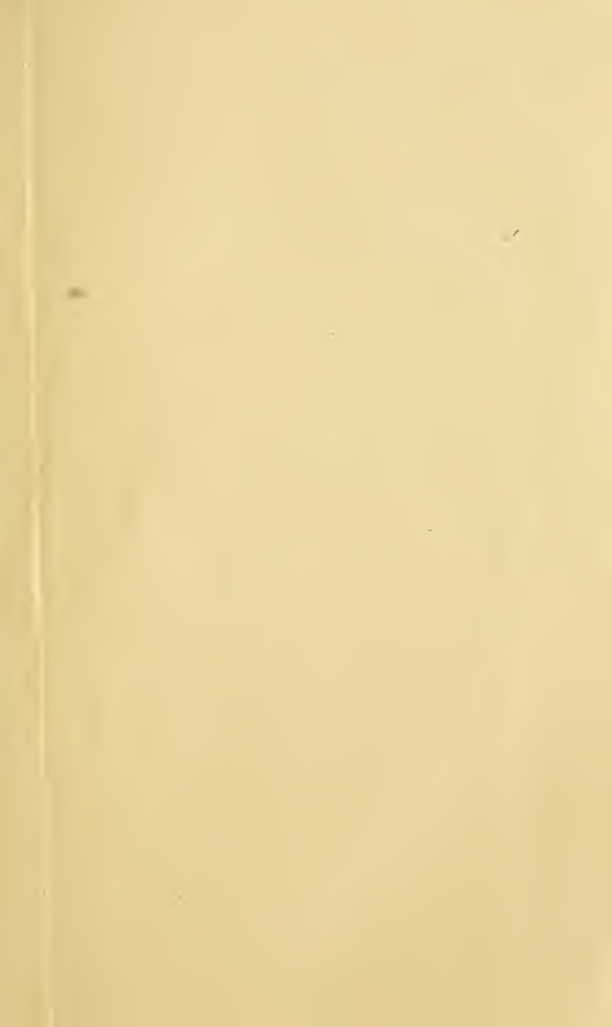


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1831







THE
CHANCERY SUIT!

A Comedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

FIRST PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN,

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1830.

By R. B. PEAKE.

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Scene—*A Village on the Coast.*

THE CHANCERY SUIT.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.—*Room in an Inn.—The Sea-beach visible from a window.*

Enter TAPSLY and MICHAEL.

Taps. Shut the door upstairs, Michael ; the Select Vestry are getting noisy in their cups.

Voices. (without) Hip, hip, hip, hurrah !

Mich. Oh, what a cruel disturbance, sure !

Taps. Have you been up to the garret to your old Aunt Rucket ? Mrs. Tapsly says she is worse.

Mich. Yes, Master ; she be near her end, I reckon. You have been very kind to the poor old bed-ridden dame.

Taps. Why, Michael, your aunt is one of my family, you know, and if we lose her, she will go off at a good wholesome old age.

Mich. (wipes his eyes) She was ninety-one last goose-day !

Voices. (without) Hip, hip, hip, hurrah !

Mich. Dang it, be quiet, can't ye,—that would wake the devil.

Taps. You must take three bottles more to the gentlemen of the Select Vestry ; how many does that make ?

Mich. Eleven of port and six of sherry, sir.

Taps. And all for the good of the parish.

Mich. Good for the Crown and Cushion too, master. [Exit.]

Taps. (*looks off*,) Eh! a postchaise come in! take care of the luggage there; this way, sir, if you please.

Enter JEREMY THISTLEBLOOM.

Jeremy. I must have a bed here to-night.

Taps. Yes, sir.—Chambermaid, light a fire in No. 6; the chimney may smoke a little at first, sir, but it will soon go off. [Exit.]

Jeremy. Smoky chimney! I have just arrived from London smoke.—So, Mr. Jeremy Thistlebloom, term being over, this is your first visit to your native village for these thirty years!—no one will recognise me; a multiplicity of daily practice in the Courts has changed my once ruddy countenance to a pale legal physiognomy: and then, instead of the air and exercise to which I was formerly accustomed, the only air I have inhaled has been that of Westminster Hall: sometimes, for change of air, Guildhall. And as for exercise, rising to address the Jury, sitting down again, and walking in a perspiring gown and wig between the doors of the Common Pleas and King's Bench.

Taps. (*without*) But I assure you, Mr. O'Doggrely.

O'Dog. (*without*) And I assure you, Mr. Crown and Cushion.

Taps. (*entering*) There is a gentleman in the room, sir.

O'Dog. (*entering*) And now there are two gentlemen in the room, sirrah, leaving yourself out. (*bows to Jeremy.*) Your most obedient, sir. (*to Tapsly.*) Ah! won't I have you down for this? (*shows a small memorandum book.*)

Taps. I'm sure I beg your pardon, Mr. O'Doggrely.

O'Dog. When it is too late, sir. Another time, beg my pardon before you commit the offence. So,

you have had a Select Vestry sitting and gormandi-
zing in your house. I counted seventeen empty bot-
tles, and a number of picked drumsticks of fowls;
I'll not put up with this; pretty doings! You may
go, Mr. Tapsly.

Taps. (aside) Curse his Irish impudence. [*Exit.*

O'Dog. (offers box) A pinch of genuine lundy-foot,
sir,—I feel myself, in duty bound, compelled to keep
the folks in this place a little in order.

Jeremy. You, I dare say, are quite in the right,
Sir; but I am not aware that I deserve the honour
of your confidence.

O'Dog. I'll be bail you'll deserve it, sir. For the
well-doing of this village, I am appointed by myself
unanimously, Inspector General from the Lord of
the Manor's mansion, down to the Purveyor of asses
milk's pigsty!

Jeremy. (aside) An eccentric, or a swindler,—(*to*
O'Dog) But now I look again, I think I have seen
you somewhere?

O'Dog. Yes, I often go there.

Jeremy. I am sure I have seen your face before.
Pardon my enquiry,—were you not, some three
years since, defendant in a case of libel in the Court
of King's Bench?

O'Dog. Of which I was honourably acquitted.
Och! that I should not recollect you again, without
your gown and tails, for the individual and intellec-
tual barrister who pleaded my cause and got me off,
—Mr.—Mr.—Mr.—

Jeremy. Mr. Courtington.

O'Dog. Mr. Courtington,—welcome, sir. If you
are making any stay in these parts, I can show you
the way to the principal houses here—the Blazon-
courts, the Thistleblooms, the Murgatroyds, and the
Griffinses.

Jeremy. You are acquainted with Mr Thistle-
bloom?

O'Dog. Intimately! the old Squire is as kind-hearted an oddity as ever lived. He has a charming little female orphan under his protection, one Miss Emily Travers.

Jeremy. Ah! (*apart.*)—I am glad to ascertain that.

O'Dog. Beautiful creature, amiable, lovely, and in want, (*aside*) like myself. Sir, I wrote this on her: (*takes out book.*)

“Oh happy the man loving Emily Travers,
If but in return, he could possibly *have* hers.”

Jeremy. Humph! don't see much in that.

O'Dog. That is because you are not acquainted with family affairs. Squire Thistlebloom, many years ago, had a serious quarrel with his younger brother, an ill-looking, cross-grained, caustic sort of fellow, as I am told; he took himself off in a huff, to seek his fortune, and has never been heard of since.

Jeremy. Well! what is all this to me?

O'Dog. Nothing, whatever; excepting my assiduity in making the neighbourhood known to you. If you are for seeing Blazoncourt Castle, I'll get you a peep. Sir Bernard Blazoncourt is as austere as a cock vulture; but his son, Mr. Frederick, is an excellent young gentleman, who occasionally honours me by laughing at my jokes; the worse the joke, the louder he laughs. If every audience followed the same example, how we modern dramatists would thrive!

Jeremy. (*aside*) I may obtain all information from this Hibernian magpie.

O'Dog. Have you dined, Sir?

Jeremy. No, I was about to order dinner.

O'Dog. Leave that to me. I know this house better than you do, Sir.

Jeremy. You are very kind, but I will not trouble you.

O'Dog. No trouble at all, (*rings bell*) You like fish? We are famous for soles here.

Enter MICHAEL.

Jeremy. Send your master.

Mich. Why as to that, if the gentleman there wishes —

O'Dog. (*takes out his book*) The rhyme for “waiter” is “traitor,” um—um. (*Pretends to write.*)

Mich. Oh! stop, Sir. Master will be here directly.
[*Exit hastily.*]

Jeremy. (*apart*) Of what profession is this person? he alarms every body by the mere sight of his red book. Must be the tax-gatherer.

Re-enter TAPSLY.

O'Dog. Some fried soles, (*to Jeremy*)—You said you liked soles? a couple of roasted chickens and an apple tart.

Jeremy. An excellent little dinner.

O'Dog. Leave me alone, Sir; and d'ye hear, Tapsly, a bottle of the capital Port wine you purchased of Mr. Simpkin.

Tapsly. I—I purchased Port of Mr. Simpkin?

O'Dog. (*whispers to Tapsly*) Yes; the wine you bought of the butler, who was dismissed from St. Bernard Blazoncourt's. No reply. It is all down here. (*shows book*). Where's your wife? I'll see the cloth laid myself; out with the best spoons and forks, for you've got a *rale* gentleman in the house.—(*to Jeremy.*) Excuse me a moment, Sir. [Exit.]

Jeremy. Humph! and pray, who may that exceedingly officious person be?

Tapsly. He is the pest of this village: the whole neighbourhood are afraid of him.

Jeremy. Is he countenanced by the resident gentry?

Tapsly. He would out-countenance any of them. He has made his way into all the families, some say by his pleasantry, others, by his impudence; he pokes his nose into every person's secrets, and turns them to his own uses.

Jeremy. What is the meaning of that little red book he carries?

Tapsly. By that he regulates (as he calls it) the affairs of the neighbourhood.

Jeremy. A village Solon!

Tapsly. A plaguy impudent, presuming, good for nothing——

Re-enter O'DOGGRELY unseen by TAPSLY; pats his back.

O'Dog. My dear fellow, don't be after praising yourself. Modesty is a beautiful quality in man.

Tapsly. (*aside*) Ahem! the devil.

O'Dog. (*writes in his book, and reads aloud.*)

“If a thing that is stolen is sweetest,
Then Simpkin's Port is the neatest,
And Tapsly, a rogue the completest.”

[*Exit Tapsly, hastily.*]

O'Dog. That was not in his line at all?

Jeremy. An oddity!—Sir, having taken the trouble to be my caterer, perhaps you will favour me with your company to dinner?

O'Dog. With great pleasure, Sir. I'll dine with you out of gratitude.

Jeremy. Gratitude!

O'Dog. Yes; because you got me out of the libel case.

Jeremy. But I have a curiosity to ascertain how you contrive to keep this house and the neighbourhood in such order?

O'Dog. Very easily, Sir. By the mere force of ridicule—ridicule,—a mighty engine, if properly ap-

plied. All the sensible folks of the place (whom I never dared to lampoon) say, that I am of more service in repressing scandal, destroying petty tyranny, and diminishing petty larceny, than *tin* acts of parliament could possibly be.

Jeremy. What first put this into your head?

O'Dog. With the frankness of an Emerald Islander, I'll tell you. Devil a soul did I know when I arrived here, and had no means of an introduction. One day I was walking outside Blazoncourt Castle, when I perceived two little wags of boys chalking these words on the wall:

“Large park and no deer,
Large cellar and no beer,
My Lord Skinflint lives here.”

Jeremy. What had that to do with it?

O'Dog. Every thing. Between ourselves, the house-keeping of Blazoncourt Castle was known to be rather shy. “Large park and no deer” was in every urchin's mouth. Now mind, a week after this, the lines were obliterated. An ox was roasted whole on the lawn, and a hogshead of ale muddled all the heads in the village. “Oh, ho! is it there;” ruminated I. “Here's a grand transmogrification effected by the mere force of a ridiculous triplet.” My eyes were opened, my stomach was empty. I put some satirical lines together; first boldly lampooned the attorney, one “*Mr. Snare*,” who I found out was very “*fond of a hare*.” Succeeded: got invited to dinner. Have carried every point by a pen with very little point ever since, and am the most useful and esteemed member of the community.

Jeremy. It must require some skill to avoid giving offence?

O'Dog. Therein consists my ingenuity; but come, Mr. Courtington, and over a bottle of Tapsly's best

Simpkins's Blazoncourt Port, I'll detail the history of the whole village.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Library in Blazoncourt Castle; Sir BERNARD BLAZONCOURT discovered with Letters at a Table.*

Sir Ber. Claim upon claim : importunate creditors! and yet if more timber is fallen, the busy tongues of the neighbourhood will proclaim my poverty. If that suit in Chancery were ended! but how? Stifle conscience, the deed is done, the bolt is forged. Forged!—blistered be my tongue for the utterance of that word. (*looks round.*) Reflection away!—money must be raised,—more mortgage. (*rings bell.*) The splendour of the House of Blazoncourt shall not be dimmed.

Enter WINTERFIELD.

Ah! Winterfield: have you dispatched one of the grooms to Mr. Snare?

Winter. I think I did. I believe I did, Sir Bernard.

Sir Ber. You think you did—old man, your services are becoming useless to me.

Winter. Pardon, gracious Master, the infirmity of your aged domestic; I fear my memory fails me.

Sir Ber. So I perceive, to my torment: did I not tell you that James was to answer the bell?

Winter. In sooth, I forgot to tell James that. It is not the young man's fault, but my misfortune.

Sir Ber. Go now at once, whilst your recollection is fresh, and discover if Mr Snare, my solicitor, has been sent for?

Winter. Yes, yes, Sir Bernard.

Sir Ber. Quick—old man.

Winter. Oh yes, Sir Bernard. (*A tap at the door. Winterfield opens it, enter MR. SNARE.*) Now, I recollect, Sir Bernard, I *did* send for Mr. Snare, two hours ago. Mr. Snare, Sir Bernard!

[*Exit.*

Sir Ber. (aside.) It is well for me that the doctard's memory is gone?

Snare. You sent for me, Sir?

Sir Ber. Mr. Snare, here are letters of immediate consequence; the long delayed Chancery suit is now likely to terminate. the result of which will place the Woodburn Estate and eighteen years' accumulations of the rents into my possession.

Snare. So, Sir, we have every reason to hope; but the glorious uncertainty—hew!

Sir Ber. Do not pester me with your doubts, Sir. The case is clear:—have I not the strongest proof of the illegitimacy of Emily Travers, the other claimant to the property?

Snare. Certainly, Sir.

Sir Ber. Is it not recorded in her father's own handwriting?—In a few weeks, these large domains must inevitably be mine. Now, Mr. Snare, my immediate object with you is, that you, without loss of time, must raise me three thousand pounds.

Snare. Will you condescend, Sir Bernard, to name the securities on which this sum is to be advanced?

Sir Ber. Will not the name of Blazoncourt, Sir—?

Snare. Sir, the name is of that respectability, that—I have the most profound respect for it—but the whole estate is mortgaged to its uttermost value. I know but of one immediate method of raising the money, if you would permit it?

Sir Ber. Proceed.

Snare. If you would consent to my application to the worthy and wealthy Mr. Thistlebloom?

Sir Ber. How dare you, who know me, offer such an insult? Before I could stoop to ask favour of that hated upstart, I would wish myself a breathless corpse.

Snare. (trembling.) Sir Bernard, I had no intention to—

Sir Ber. The very name irritates me. Is not Mr. Thistlebloom the means of supporting the dilatory Chancery Suit, preventing my possession of the

Woodburn Estate? Does he not protect the minion, Emily Travers? I would give a thousand pounds, if that girl could be removed from the neighbourhood.

Snare. Indeed, sir Bernard!—I hope I could contrive it for less than that.

Sir Ber. How! speak.

Snare. Every man has his weak point. Now, I own contrivance to be *one* of my weak points. Miss Emily Travers is defendant in the Woodburn Chancery Suit. I will find some little flaw, some little loop-hole by which we can make it appear she has incurred the penalty of contempt of Court.

Sir Ber. Ay?

Snare. If I can contrive that, we shall have her snugly locked up in the Fleet Prison.

Sir Ber. Remove her hence, and depend on my lasting favour; but this money must be sought. I, have plate, pictures, library; you know the value, lose no time—go.

Snare. I will endeavour to obey your wishes. Good morning, Sir Bernard. (*bows*)—How plentiful the pheasants are in your shrubberies!—(*aside*) dear me! with a little gravy and bread sauce!—don't take the hint—I've earned my thirteen and four-pence, I think.

[*Exit.*

Sir Ber. That hireling, for his interest's sake, will not betray his trust. (*look at letters*) What! are traders and mechanics to reproach the representative of an ancient House?—insolence!—and yet, accursed fate impels me to their power, exposes me to their scoffs.

Enter FREDERICK.

Ha! Frederick—what sport to-day?

Fred. Not a shot, sir.

Sir Ber. You are out of spirits.

Fred. I own I am depressed, sir,—my thoughts ever revert to one painful subject.

Sir Ber. Ah, what may that be ?

Fred. Pardon, sir. I have for some time past been impressed with the melancholy idea that—(*hesitates*)

Sir Ber. Speak, Frederick.

Fred. That your affairs are in a state of embarrassment !

Sir Ber. Who has told you this, sir ?

Fred. On my honour, no one. Forgive me, my dear father, but I have daily watched your anxious eye, your mental torment, and the quivering of your parched lip. Some secret fatal to your peace is undermining your health. I behold a vast expenditure ; I have noticed the noble oaks, the pride of our park, falling to the ground under the woodman's axe !

Sir Ber. Peace, Frederick ; and learn that your near and dear connexion to me gives you no right to investigate my affairs or to pry into my secret thoughts. Let it suffice you to hear that I am not yet reduced to the poverty you conjecture,—that I am rich, inexhaustibly rich !

Fred. Your word is ever sacred to me ! pardon my inconsiderate enquiry. (*Sir Bernard gives him his hand*) I—I had intended, sir, to address you on another subject—your advice on the choice of a profession.

Sir Ber. A profession ! Let those who are not possessed of an honourable and ancient title, and of a noble estate, seek professions. The heir of the House of Blazoncourt will not be under the necessity to toil for bread. In the mean time, Frederick, though I do not wish to control your actions, it will gratify me if you will hold yourself with more reserve to the family of Mr. Thistlebloom. I have a just and rooted objection to them. Adieu, my son ! (*looks at letters*) Yes, the splendid liveries will arrive on Wednesday ; the suite of rooms on the north wing are to be superbly refitted, preparatory to the visit

of the Duke. And, Frederick, *you* are not forgotten,—your new phaeton and greys, your father's gift, are probably now on the road from London. [*Exit.*

Fred. I am astounded; how could I have been so mistaken,—how ridiculous must I have appeared!—Adieu, blue devils!—I'll knock down the birds again ha! ha! ha! Now I may burn my literary attempt, (the employment of many a solitary hour!) I dare not offend Sir Bernard's notions of dignity by letting him know that I had written a Comedy—a Comedy complete in all but the title: I trembled at my father's allusion to the Thistleblooms. Had he conjectured the real cause of my visits there—to gaze at my adored Emily, to sigh,—plague! I shall lose my spirits again. Hey for my new phaeton and gallant greys! [*Exit.*

SCENE III—*Garden of Blazoncourt Castle—an Arbour.*

Enter O'DOGGRELY.

O'Dog. I' faith, that Mr. Courtington the barrister is a shrewd old boy; he discovered, that though the planets have neglected to shine prosperously on me, I was a Trinity-man, and a gentleman born. Now, where's Mr. Frederick, whose confidant I have the honour to be? Old Courtington wants a few minutes' conversation with him.

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. Ah! O'Doggrely.

O'Dog. Pray, sir, what are your movements to be to-morrow? do you intend to go shooting or love-making,—do you mean to be a Leveret killer, or a Lady-killer? I like that conceit.

“Will your honour kill a hare
Or will you visit lady fair?”

Fred. A truce to your rhymes, sir,—carry them to the bellman.

O'Dog. "Carry them to the bellman,
You've said a pretty think ;
I'll take them to your *belle*, man,—
A *belle* that wants a ring."

Fred. I will not have any jesting on that subject.
(*Apart*) Before I destroy the product of my fancy,
I feel the petty vanity of an Author to ascertain if
my Comedy has merit in the opinion of another. I
will request O'Doggrely to read it—he has written
for the Stage.—Hark'ye, collegian, I think well of
your literary taste,—I wish to ask your ideas on a
particular subject?

O'Dog. Name your subject, and I will overflow
you with ideas. Byron has aptly remarked that an
Irishman with a little whiskey in his head is the
most imaginative being in existence.—I've had a drop.

Fred. First, I must demand your secrecy?

O'Dog. Oh—honour!

Fred. Know then, to amuse my vacant hours, that
I have attempted to write a Comedy. You smile.

O'Dog. One ought to smile at a Comedy, particu-
larly if it is sentimental.

Fred. I have interspersed a little sentiment,—what
else can you do with your heroine?

O'Dog. Make her an Irishwoman, and give *her* a
little whiskey.

Fred. The dramatic authors of the present day
are abused for their inferiority to their predecessors,
justly on the score of wit ; but I apprehend that the
public of the present day would decry in a modern
production the intrigue, the *double-entendre*, and the
display of vice which may have been embodied in
the originals from which the female characters were
formerly drawn. Now, I have chosen a model of
beauty, virtue and simplicity, for my heroine.

Enter SIR BERNARD and SNARE *at the back,*
unseen.

Fred. What think you of Miss Emily Travers?

O'Dog. Charming!

Fred. Exquisite!

O'Dog. Milk-punch is nothing to her.

Fred. Pshaw! To answer the purpose for which I own an irresistible impulse—I will confide in you—I have made use of her character.

Sir Ber. (apart) How! (*retires to arbour, followed by Snare, listening.*)

Fred. I took her as I found her,—lovely, interesting, open-hearted. Now, my dear O'Doggrely, you see how much I rely on your secrecy in this affair; if it was to reach the ears of my father, I should be ruined.

Sir Ber. (apart) Indeed!

Fred. You know, for some reasons which I cannot explain, he entertains a dislike to the poor young lady.

O'Dog. That's not entertaining at all! *he* is too oold for his gallantry now.

Fred. Well, in the hope of throwing a little more spirit into my dialogue, I certainly have, I own, taken some liberties with her character, but this was to aid my plot!

Snare. (apart) His plot!

O'Dog. Och, by the hooky! if Sir Bernard catches you plotting! (*laughs.*)

Fred. Listen! I have represented my little heroine—

O'Dog. That's your Emily Travers, you mean.

Fred. Hush! I have represented her as an oppressed creature, but, with the mild dignity of her manner, overturning the schemes of a powerful opponent and his rascally legal agent.

Snare. (apart) That is libellous.

O'Dog. I hope you have put nervous language into her mouth;

Fred. I have; to uphold her just rights and to create the utter confusion of her unprincipled enemies!

Sir Ber. (apart) Do I hear correctly?

O'Dog. If you love me, don't spare the lawyer, or the big rogue his employer.

Snare. (*apart*) D'ye hear that?

O'Dog. On the score of poetical justice, the whole house will go with you.

Fred. I have not yet done that, but I intend to load them both with opprobrium, and expose them to infamy.

Sir Ber. (*apart*) Furies! what does he contemplate?

Fred. (*looks round*) Hush! what was that?

O'Dog. Nothing! Listeners never hear any good of themselves, so never mind.

Fred. I am puzzled by what name to call my bold attempt.

O'Dog. There is certainly a title wanted.

Fred. Yes: the title is wanted, and that is very essential; come this way. Sir Bernard will now be taking his evening walk in the garden.—Come, and I will put you in possession of all I have as yet done in this matter—ha! ha! How the world will stare, if I should succeed!

O'Dog. You must keep your name concealed, because of the newspapers, you know.

Fred. That would at once reveal it to my father. You shall hear the rest—"thereby hangs a tale."

O'Dog. You will be applauded to the skies for this your maiden effort; but lay it on the confounded lawyer and his patron as thick and as hot as mustard, my dear fellow.

[*Exeunt Frederick and O'Doggrely.*]

SIR BERNARD and SNARE come forward.

Snare. Pretty doings, Sir Bernard!

Sir Ber. Frederick a traitor to his father, treating the matter with such levity, and with such a confident—he named Emily Travers, her powerful opponent.

Snare. And his rascally legal agent.

Sir Ber. How has Frederick discovered that the title is wanted?

Snare. I cannot divine, sir; at any rate, we must take time by the forelock, and endeavour to place Miss Travers in safe custody. Lay it on the lawyer as hot as mustard,—well, well, the lawyer must go to work then.

Sir Ber. Away, Snare! be cautious and diligent. [Exit.

Snare. Miss Emily shall be a prisoner of the Warden of the Fleet before to-morrow night—rascally agent, indeed!

Re-enter O'DOGGRELY with a manuscript in his hand.

O'Dog. A title wanted—wanted a title, we'll call it "*Rascality or Ruin and Robbery.*" Oh, for a title, a good title. (*sees Snare*) Och, old vinegar visage! [Exit running.

Snare. Turn out that mad Irishman. [Exit.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Antichamber in Thistlebloom Hall.*

Enter EMILY followed by JENNY.

Emily. Jenny, Jenny!

Jenny. I am here, Miss.

Emily. Have I been enquired for in the drawing-room?

Jenny. No, miss; the ladies are playing at cards. Mrs. Snare and Mrs. Post wrangling, as they always do when they have a friendly evening together.

Emily. And Mr. Thistlebloom?

Jenny. The Old Gentleman has dropt off to sleep.

Emily. Old Gentleman! You are too familiar, Jenny.

Jenny. You can't deny he is *old*, miss; and I know from my Christmas boxes that he is a *Gentleman*; so where's the harm in calling him the *Old Gentleman*?

Emily. Well, have you been to the farm? Any letter, my good girl?

Jenny. (*giving a note from her pocket.*) There it is, miss. What, miss, an't you going to read it now?

Emily. Why should I read it now?

Jenny. I don't know; but somehow I like to look at you when you read Mr. Frederick's letters.

Emily. On your life, Jenny, be silent. I have trusted you more than ever mistress did her maid.

Jenny. And I am proud to say, that I have been more faithful than ever maid was to mistress. Pray read the note, miss.

Emily. To oblige you, Jenny, I will. (*opens and reads.*)

Jenny. (*observing Emily*) Ah, ah! I thought how it would be; the colour comes into her cheek like a carnation. She smiles, she sighs, she reads a line over again; a tear starts in her eye; she kisses the letter, and is as happy as a bird. (*takes out handkerchief,*) Oh, it is catching—thank ye, miss.

Emily. Why do you thank me, Jenny?

Jenny. O, Miss, it is as good as a lesson to see you. I shall know how to deport myself when I receive a note from my own true love; and I shall have one soon, miss; my dear Dicky is learning to write.

Emily. Hush! I must return to the drawing-room.

Jenny. Stay one moment, miss; the ladies are wrapped up in their cards, and won't ask for you. I wonder why Mr. Frederick don't go down on his knees to the crusty old *Barrow Knight*, his father, and say what he wants. I'll warrant me, you

wouldn't find much difficulty in persuading your guardian, Mr. Thistlebloom.

Emily. Impossible! I am peculiarly situated. Mr. Thistlebloom is a most eccentric character—kind, yet suddenly irritable; and if circumstances permitted that I could disclose my secret to him, he would in all probability burst into laughter in my face.

Jenny. Ah! that is his odd way, miss; I have seen him in the midst of a merry tale with the tears trickling down his strawberry cheeks.

Emily. Mr. Thistlebloom has the singular habit of not appreciating that which is said to him at the moment.

Jenny. He never laughs at a joke until ten minutes after it is uttered.

Emily. Nor expresses pity for distress, until he has had time to reflect on it; but I shall be missed at the tea-table. Jenny, (*points to letter,*) be cautious. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*Drawing-room at THISTLEBLOOM'S.*—

A Card-table, round which are seated MRS. SNARE, MRS. POST, MRS. WILLOWLY, MISS SALLOWFIELD, MRS. GRAVEBURY;—GUY THISTLEBLOOM asleep in an arm chair with a handkerchief over his head: Tea table at the back, servants in attendance.

Mrs. Snare. It is quite provoking, Mrs. Post,—Pam again!

Mrs. Post. Fortune favours me.

Mrs. Snare. Particularly—ha! ha!—there was an adage that 'they who were unlucky at cards were happy in their matrimonial speculations.'—(*aside to Miss Sallowfield*) Mr. Post has been dead these ten years.

Mrs. Post. Shall I trouble you to put in your loo and deal, instead of talking, Mrs. Snare?

Mrs. Willow. I declare Mr. Thistlebloom is asleep!

Mrs. Post. Indeed? Emily, dear, where is Emily?

Enter EMILY.

It is quite shocking that he, the only gentleman in the room, should sit snoring there, in company with six females.

Emily. It is a pity to wake him ; he has been in exercise the whole day.

Mrs. Snare. Then a little nap may make him agreeable.

Mrs. Post. (to Emily) Mr. Thistlebloom will scold you for lukewarm tea.

Emily. (taps his shoulder) Sir, sir,—Mr. Thistlebloom.

Thistle. (half asleep) Throw him into the horse-pond, neck and heels!

Mrs. Post. (rising and apart to Emily) Wake my brother at once, Emily, for he is apt to utter the strangest words in his sleep, and we have the clergyman's lady here!

Emily. (shakes him gently) My dear sir.

Thistle. Give me my whip. *(waking)* Hey, hallo! bless me! have I been napping, eh?

Mrs. Snare. Why, my good Mr. Thistlebloom, whereabouts is your gallantry?

Thistle. I'faith, Madam, I believe it is about fifty-nine years of age, and a little the worse for wear.

Mrs. Snare. How could you sleep, whilst we were talking?

Thistle I was dreaming of a water-mill.

Mrs. Post. Will you join our round game, brother?

Thistle. Not by any manner of means, I hate cards, they send me to sleep.

Emily. Some tea, sir?

Thistle. By all manner of means—like tea—keeps me awake!

Emily. (handing him a cup) How did you find the unfortunate cottager to-day, sir, whom your humanity led you to visit—poor Gilbert, who broke his arm, and has an invalid wife and numerous family?

Thistle. Ha! ha! ha! (*sips tea, and bursts out laughing at intervals*) Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Snare. Well I should have thought that no laughing matter.

Mrs. Post. My brother is laughing at the last joke he thought of, before he went to sleep.

Thistle. Ha! ha! ha! ha! I met the Irish poet, O'Doggrely. He was expecting a letter from Dublin,—ha! ha! ha!—the postman was an hour beyond his time. You know how O'Doggrely keeps folks in order. Instead of saying to the postman, "You rascal!—what makes you so late?" out comes his little red book,—ha! ha! ha! The postman turned pale, and O'Doggrely wrote,—ha! ha! ha!—I shan't forget the joke if I was to live a hundred years,—he wrote,—ha! ha! ha!

"I wish that our letter man
Would turn out a better man!
For I must say at most,
He's as dull as a Post."

Ha! ha! ha!

Enter JENNY, introducing O'DOGGRELY.

Jenny. Mr. O'Doggrely, sir.

Thistle. Talk of the dévil—well!

O'Dog. Ladies, your servant. Mr. Thistlebloom, yours.

Thistle. Well, any thing new,—any thing new in the little red book?

G'Dog. O, I've a subject: a Select Vestry have been feeding to-day at the tavern; every man Jack shall hear of it to-morrow. It shall be sung under their windows by a chorus of half-starved paupers! I've touched them off. I've a remarkably clear head.

Mrs. Snare. (*apart*) Yes—nothing in it—

O'Dog. (*reads pompously*)

“Aid me, ye Nine, to abuse the Select Vestry!
They’d no thoughts for the poor, though they had for
the pastry.
They closed up the doors, and they closed up their
hearts,
And met to discuss—fowls, fish, flesh, and tarts.”

Thistle. (*sighs*) Ah!

O’Dog. Ah! why is that ah?

Thistle. Poor Gilbert! there he lay with his arm
in a splinter, his pallid wife gazing on him in acute
distress, while the little hungry children were cry-
ing around the bed for food. (*takes out handkerchief,*
and weeps) Pshaw! Ladies, mind your game at
cards; I am an old fool!

Emily. Dear sir! such feelings do honour to hu-
man nature.

O’Dog. Philanthropy is the prettiest of virtues.—
I’ll make a powerful impression on him by compas-
sionate eloquence—speaking of charity, sir,—when
Scipio Africanus was in the zenith of his glory, he—

Thistle. (*chuckles*) Ha! na! ha! (*continues to*
laugh) Pastry and vestry! hearts and tarts! ha! ha!
ha!

Mrs. Snare. Mrs. Post, it is unbearable!

Mrs. Post. Mrs. Snare, I request you to be less
intemperate! (*altercation at table*)

O’Dog. Faith, there’s an insurrection among the
Tabbies.

Mrs. Snare. I play no more. (*rising from table*)
No: I have expressed my conviction of the fact. If
you have a *penchant* for losing your money—good.
I never will sit down to cards with a certain person
here, again.

Thistle. Hey, hey, ladies! what is the matter?

Mrs. Snare. Your sister, sir, can best explain.

Thistle. Sister, Mrs. Post, what is it?

O’Dog. (*aside*) Post turns a deaf ear!

Thistle. Will somebody explain? (*altercation be-*
tween all the ladies)

Emily. Listen to reason.

O'Dog. (*aside*) Five Tabbies, and expect any reason! I will reduce them to order. (*takes out his book, and places himself in the group. They are immediately silent. He writes with his pencil*) "Tabbies,—rabies!"

Thistle. Silence is obtained. Mrs. Willowly, I beg I may be immediately informed what has happened.

Mrs. Willow. My friend Mrs. Snare has avowed it, and I am bound to believe her. Good night, sir.

[*Curtsies, and Exit.*]

Thistle. Avowed what—avowed what—what the devil has she avowed? Will no one answer? Mrs. Gravebury, madam, I entreat—I—

Mrs. Grave. (*curtseying formally*) I have the honour to wish you a very good evening, sir. [*Exit.*]

Thistle. There are certain lengths to which a man may strain his temper, or his patience; but, fire and fury, the devil and Doctor Faustus, I will know the meaning of this disagreement in my own house. Miss Sallowfield, I insist upon your expounding the riddle.

(*Miss Sallowfield points to the card-table, mournfully exhibits an empty purse, puts her handkerchief to her eyes, and exit.*)

Are they all poisoned, or all mad, or all—no, they have had nothing but tea. Sister, you once was a woman of sense.

Mrs. Post. Do I live? can I live under such imputation! Oh! oh! oh! (*hysterically.*) Snare, Snare, Snare, Snare.

Mrs. Snare. Yes, 'twas I did it; and that was the last game of cards I shall ever play in this house.

[*Exit.*]

Thistle. In the name of fury, what did she do?

Enter JENNY hastily.

Jenny. Help! Miss Sallowfield has fainted away on the stairs.

[*Runs out.*]

Thistle. Sister, sister!

Emily. Speak, madam.

Mrs. Post. Oh!—What at my years is the most inestimable point?—reputation! What at my age is the greatest delight?—a friendly game at cards! Her base insinuations will destroy all; my reputation! my happiness! my only amusement! Exclude me from a card table, and my existence would be no longer bearable. Oh! oh! oh!

Thistle. What has Mrs. Snare done, I say?

Mrs. Post. She has called me a cheat. Oh! oh! oh! At my time of life. Oh! oh! (*sinks in a chair*) Oh! oh!

Thistle. Help! burnt feathers! brandy—

(*All surround Mrs. Post, attempting to revive her.*

She has a pack of cards in her hand, which fly about at every sob.) [Scene closes in.]

SCENE III.—*A Room in the Inn.*

Enter JEREMY THISTLEBLOOM.

Jeremy. Now to prepare for a meeting with my elder brother and his family. What a fool's animosity have I nourished! brooding over a bitter feeling for one third of a brief existence:—but the cause—the cause was deeply rooted—pooh! the cause is over, and we will shake hands out of court. Ah, Guy, Guy Thistlebloom, what a contrast was there between your character and mine! you were sensitive, and easily moved to the extremes of grief and joy; I, cold, perverse, obdurate—but stone in time will wear away, and my hard heart now beats to embrace my relatives again.—(*goes to table*) Let me again peruse the letter I have addressed to my brother; the first I have written to him these thirty years.—(*reads*) “Dear Guy, many years since, your younger brother, as eccentric a being as yourself, left your roof with the intention of quitting his

'country for ever; but circumstances induced him
'to change his name, and pursue an honourable and
'lucrative profession in London. If you have not
'forgotten and can forgive, welcome will again be a
'reconciliation to your still affectionate brother, Je-
'remy Thistlebloom."—So, that shall go, (*folds and
seals*) and how will the epistle be received? (*rings
bell*) We shall meet, shake hands, recount old sto-
ries, and never quarrel again!

Enter MICHAEL.

Mich. (*sobbing*) Oh—O—did you ring, sir.

Jeremy. Yes—this letter must be conveyed to Mr.
Thistlebloom's. What makes your eyes so red, boy?

Mich. Oh—O—I've been a crying.

Jeremy. A big fellow like you crying?

Mich. I can't help it—old Aunt Rucket—poor old
'oman! died—she was only ninety-two.

Jeremy. Only ninety-two! Well, she has paid
the debt which we must all pay to nature.

Mich. She's gotten no debts. (*sobs*) I'm left her
executioner! If you ring the bell any more, I shan't
come up to you again.

Jeremy. The devil you won't!

Mich. Master has given me leave to go over to
the Lawyer's who has got Aunt Rucket's will, and
to buy a bit of crape to put on my white hat for
mourning—so, Cousin Ben is to wait on the compa-
ny.—(*calls off*) Come in, Ben.

Enter BEN.

Show yourself to the gentleman, Ben—sir, this here
person will attend your bell.

Jeremy. Why, he is a sailor!

Ben. Yes sir, one of the water-guard!

Jeremy. One of the rum-and-water guard, by the
look of him—very well; send this letter to Thistle-
bloom Hall.

Mich. Yes, sir—Ben, you are to wait. (*crosses*)
Come along—come along, man!

Ben. I thought you said I was to wait. (*trips across*) Tumble up, my hearty!

[*Exeunt Michael and Ben.*]

Jeremy. Now for these cursed papers again; it appears that Sir Bernard Blazoncourt is quite confident respecting the way in which the Chancery Suit will be decided; plague, I've come into the country for recreation, and have my hands full of business. When shall I inhale fresh air, or get my face bronzed in the sun, or even find time to eat my dinner?

Re-enter BEN.

Ben. Ahoy!

Jeremy. What do you say?

Ben. A gemman has brought his horse to an anchor at the door, and sent up this here. (*gives a card.*)

Jeremy. (*reads*) "Mr. Frederick Blazoncourt"—request him to be good enough to walk in.

Ben. Oy, Oy, sir. (*bell rings without*) Hip, avast—five bells—here's the devil to pay, and no pitch hot!

[*Trips off.*]

Jeremy. There's a pretty fellow for a waiter! Now have I an unpleasant task,—no matter, I shall do my duty.

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. I received a message through Mr. O'Dog-grely, sir, that you had a private communication to make to me: that there might not be any interruption, I have waited on you here, in preference to giving you the trouble of coming to Blazoncourt Castle.

Jeremy. I thank you, sir. Mine will be rather an extraordinary conversation from a stranger, though I believe my name is not unknown to you.

Fred. The name of Courtington appears too frequently in the public journals as an able expositor of

the laws of our country, to need any farther introduction.

Jeremy. I am a very blunt, straight-forward person; I have made an useless endeavour to see Sir Bernard; finding that he is inaccessible, I venture to expostulate with his son on the impolicy of continuing a certain Chancery Suit.

Fred. My good sir, I do not interfere with the affairs of my father.

Jeremy. Mr. Blazoncourt, I am anxious to save an exposure which will give you great cause for pain.

Fred. Sir, I never did an action of which I could be ashamed!

Jeremy. But——your father——

Fred. I will not have his honour questioned!

Jeremy. A patient hearing now will save you a world of wo in perspective; it may be repulsive to your feelings, but——

Fred. (*impatently.*) Mr. Courtington!

Jeremy. I should have wished to have paved the way a little, first—but—I come to the point. Sir Bernard Blazoncourt is a villain.

Fred. That infamous epithet to my revered father? a personal chastisement——

Jeremy. Humph!

Fred. This must be answered. Though your present conduct denies it, your rank in your profession marks you as a gentleman, and not beneath my notice. If your courage will permit you to remain here a short hour, you will hear from me, sir.

[*Exit hastily.*]

Jeremy. Stay, sir—gone. Bravo, Mr. Jeremy! another agreeable addition to the country air and exercise; and now, before I can possibly introduce myself to my family, from whom I have been estranged so many years, I shall be popped off in a duel. The hot-headed young spark did not give me time to attempt an apology; he'll wing me, and I shall never be able to hold up my right arm in an impressive manner to a London jury-box again.

Enter O'DOGGRELY.

O'Dog. Eh, Mr. Courtington,—you are looking serious, sir; did the soles disagree with you?

Jeremy. No; somebody else has disagreed with me.

O'Dog. Och, by the powers! I witnessed a pretty petticoat disagreement at Squire Thistlebloom's. It will require all the delicacy and ingenuity of my pen. Four *ould* tabbies entered into a conspiracy to accuse the fifth of cheating them at cards. Now, from what I know of dear Mrs. Post, I conceive that impossible.

Jeremy. (aside) My poor married sister!

O'Dog. I'll give the ladies such a jingling, and the charity boys shall sing it at church to them. Where's my book? I'faith, here's a large hole in my pocket; I hope I hav'nt lost the book. Bless my soul, here's a slit; it is the only sort of *rent* I ever get in my pocket. (*puts his hand through the hole*) Ah! the book is in my safe side. (*takes it from the other side*) Let's see; there was mrs Gravebury, mrs. Willowly, mrs. Snare, and miss Sallowfield—difficult names for a rhyme, (*looks at Jeremy*)—I'faith, he is not attending to me.

Jeremy. (abstracted) But I have no friend here.

O'Dog. No friend here! no friend here! and isn't mr. O'Doggrely here? And did not you, mr. Courtington, eloquently lift a heavy libel case off these shoulders? No friend here, indeed?

Jeremy. (apart) And why should not I ask him? If I am called out, there is not time to send to London for a junior counsel to attend me. I dare say he has been concerned in such affairs before now—mr. O'Doggrely, were you ever second in a duel?

O'Dog. Ay, and first too, very often. Tell me, is there any fun of that sort likely to take place?

Jeremy. Fun? yes; and the fun of it is that I, who have not been in the village twelve hours, am now expecting a mortal defiance.

O'Dog. I congratulate you—fortunate creature; here have I been dwelling two long years, and have not been lucky enough to get challenged yet. Who is your opponent?

Jeremy. Why, these are peculiar matters. Suppose, before I reveal his name, that I first receive his message?

O'Dog. Ay, perhaps the gentleman may think better of it.

Jeremy. I hope he may

O'Dog. Fie, fie! You would be disappointed!

Jeremy. Not in the least! Well, should this individual persist in his threat, will you be good enough to become my friend on the occasion?

O'Dog. To be sure I will, Mr. Courtington; and if your old pistols are rusty for want of use, I have a pair that in their life-time have killed fifty Trinity boys.

Jeremy. You are very good. I hope I shall not have occasion to trouble you.

O'Dog. The trouble will be a pleasure, Sir. I will not interrupt you now; but on the chance, I'll just step home and give my little Dublin peace-makers a sight of daylight, and half an hour's polishing, (*apart*) and in my way, call and return Mr. Blazon-court his comedy. (*takes MS. out.*) Oh, and haven't I hit on a rare title for it—a title that will astonish and please my friend Frederick? (*to Court.*) Depend upon me, Mr. Courtington, I will see you fall like a man, and buried like a Christian. [*Exit.*]

Jeremy. The very smell of an affair of honour has invigorated that sanguinary Hibernian! Heigho, Jeremy! how came you to be silly enough to put yourself up as a mark to be shot at?—Now must I, in the event of falling, (for no one knows what may happen) write another letter to my brother Guy, who, the moment he has found out that I am alive, will discover that I am dead!—No matter, I will first do my duty to the poor girl Emily Travers. Why the devil did I come for fresh air into the country! [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—*An Avenue at Blazoncourt Castle.*

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. Strange conduct! my father avoiding me. His orders to his servants that I am not to intrude on his privacy. He comes! I will present myself, and discover how I have given him annoyance.

Enter SIR BERNARD.

Sir Ber. Who crosses my path?—Frederick!

Fred. My dear father!

Sir Ber. (*Aside.*) Viper! but hold—dare you still call me by that name?

Fred. Still call you by that endearing name? ay, and I hope that I shall ever with fondest love and profound respect be permitted to do so.

Sir Ber. You are embarrassed—is it not with the guilty thought of having betrayed your parent?

Fred. Betray *you*, sir! What can be the meaning of those dark words?

Sir Ber. (*Aside.*) Though I distinctly heard—I cannot yet believe. No: I must not own myself the eaves-dropper! Frederick, it grieves me to discover, that in direct opposition to my wishes, you are in correspondence with Emily Travers.

Fred. Sir!

Sir Ber. Is it not utter destruction of my views for your future aggrandizement, to own yourself enamoured of a low-born beggar?

Fred. Ah, Sir! did you but know Miss Travers—her gentleness—

Sir Ber. Gentleness! a subdued humility, becoming her situation in life. I command you sir, on your boasted duty as a son, to relinquish all idea of this degrading connexion!

Fred. Father, hear me. I love her, and I am happy in the belief that I am beloved.

Sir Ber. Romantic fool! obey me. What!—yes, it is then in human nature to raise the hand against

the parent. Go, sir! blacken the character of your father! denounce him to his bitterest enemies as a villain! encourage the finger of scorn to point at the author of your being!

(*Frederick attempts to seize his hand, Sir Bernard walks up.*)

Fred. How fearful is his anger! How shall I appease you, sir? by what title shall I—

Enter O'DOGGRELY running, with the Manuscript in his hand.

O'Dog. Title, my boy, I've got it! I'll tell you (*reads pompously*)—"The Implacable Father; or, Tyrannic conduct never fails to meet with its just retribution, present or posthumous." (*Sees Sir Bernard.*) Och, powers! I've let the cat out of the bag to the high and mighty ould gentleman, (*to Fred.*) You had better own all at once.

Fred. (to Sir Bernard) Sir, I beg to assure you that the words you heard just now, bore no affinity to the painful subject on which we were arguing a moment previous.

Sir Ber. Frederick! I shall not feel inclined to credit assertions, until I perceive that you choose for your associates gentlemen of birth and education.

O'Dog. (apart.) That's a rap at my door; but I'll answer it myself. Sir Bernard, if you are about making the smallest allusions to me, permit me to set you right, if you should happen to be wrong.

Fred. Cease, Mr. O'Doggrely.

O'Dog. Sir, I was a gentleman born and bred. I was educated at "*Trin. Col. Dub.*" and sir, I inherited a good fortune, which I honourably spent, and more than that, twice over, before I arrived at years of discretion.

Sir Ber. I have no doubt, sir, of your infinite merit, but I wish that Mr. Frederick Blazoncourt would in future be more prudent in the selection of his companions.

[*Exit.*

O'Dog. (*aside.*) "My Lord Skinflint lives here."—
And this language to a poet and to the son of a poet!

Fred. I am the most unfortunate fellow in existence.

O'Dog. In your intimacy with me. Good bye, Mr. Frederick,—your hand,—though it will cost me more than I can afford to lose—your friendship, I am not the man to keep a breach open betwixt father and son.

Fred. Stay, Stay—

O'Dog. No; you shall not be pestered any longer, I will go and enlist in the Irish Fusileers, and get my potatoe of a head shot off.

Fred. I do not choose, on such slight grounds, to abandon my friend.

O'Dog. Your friend abandons you!

Fred. Never! (*seizing his hand.*)

O'Dog. Ah! how you thrust every one of my par-
ries!

Fred. At this moment, I have the greatest need of a friend,—a friend entirely unconnected with my family.

O'Dog. Such a friend am I—Sir Bernard is evidence of that.

Fred. I have an affair of honour on my hands, a peremptory duty to perform. (*apart.*) Yes, my father, though you will not appreciate my respect and affection, yet I will uphold your name, and risk my life in clearing your reputation of stigma.—(*To O'Dog.*) I have been grossly insulted this morning.

O'Dog. I am glad to hear it.

Fred. Eh!—why?

O'Dog. It will give me the delightful opportunity of carrying the challenge to your antagonist.

Fred. You will materially oblige me—I know I may depend on you for the necessary arrangements:—here is the letter already written; lose no time, convey this to the gentleman as directed, and you will find me waiting in the farm shrubbery.—Adieu.

[*Exit, after giving a letter to O'Doggrely.*]

O' Dog. I have my hands full to my heart's content now. I must take care to fix the hours so, that one little entertainment I am engaged in may not interfere with the other. Let me see: Mr. Frederick Blazoncourt is the drawer of the billet, who is to be the acceptor? (*Reads direction.*) Och! murder—here's a quandary!—(*Reads.*) "To Mr. Courtington."—Is it Mr. Courtington he is challenging? and I have undertaken to be second to both parties!—I'm kilt—kilt entirely. My friend Frederick going to fight my friend the honest barrister!—What's to be done, what's to be done?—no time must be lost, for at any rate, at this present writing they have only got half a second between them. [*Exit.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Apartment at Thistlebloom Hall.*

THISTLEBLOOM *enters, followed by a Servant.*

Thistle. No, no, I wont ride to-day—I'm as melancholy as a cat in damp weather. I want something to stimulate me—Who did you say wished to speak to me?

Servant. Tapsly, Sir—landlord of the Crown and Cushion.

Thistle. What the devil does he want?—show him in. [*Exit Servant.*]

I'm in that sort of nervous irritation, I should like somebody to come and claw me all over with a garden rake.

Servant ushers in TAPSLY.

Well, Mr. Tapsly?

Tapsly. Please your Worship, a London gentleman at my house wrote this letter—Michael my waiter is engaged, so I stepped up with it myself.

Thistle. Wait and see if there's an answer required.—A Londoner! who do I know in London? thank mercy, very few.—(*opens and reads.*) “Dear Guy.”—Who the devil *dear Guys* me?—(*reads.*) “Thirty years since your younger brother, as eccentric a being as yourself, quarrelled with you and left your roof. (*reads to himself in an anxious and hurried manner.*) If you have not forgotten”—forgotten!—“and can forgive,”—can forgive?—“welcome will again be the reconciliation to your still affectionate brother, Jeremy!”—The carriage—quick—fly, Tapsly, fly! [*Exit Tapsly. (rings bell.)* Poor Jeremy!—wonderful—turned up after thirty years! (*rings again.*)

Enter Servant.

Send for miss Emily immediately, tell her it is of the most serious consequence—of the deepest interest.

[*Exit Servant.*

Jeremy!—(*bursts into tears.*) Jeremy—dead! Jeremy!—(*suddenly becomes excited.*) alive!—alive—my brother—my playmate!—The cricket—the bowls—all the recollections of my youth, the vivid picture of happiness and enjoyment revives—What is there to be melancholy about? I ought to rejoice, I'm sure I ought—I—will rejoice. (*wipes his eyes—begins singing and dancing.*)

Enter EMILY.—She is surprised—he dances up to her and puts his hand round her waist.

Emily. What can have happened, sir?

Thistle. Excitement!

Emily. Sir?

Thistle. Stimulus!

Emily. (*with difficulty stopping his dancing.*) Pray explain.

Thistle. (*gives letter.*) Read that—read that. Congratulate me, my love, I am so happy!—nothing in the world now shall ever depress me again. (*re-commences dancing.*)

Emily. This is extraordinary, sir,—You never acquainted me with the reason of your brother's resolution in withdrawing himself from his family?

Thistle. An odd affair, but three words will give you a clue to it. Jeremy is my junior, he fell desperately in love with a beautiful girl, but kept his passion a secret. But when he ventured to avow it to the lady, to his utter confusion, he discovered that I—I—his elder brother, had been, *sub rosa*, the accepted suitor:—stung to the quick, he quitted us: we have not seen nor heard of him from that time till this—but, ah! melancholy recollection, alas! I was less fortunate than he!

Emily. Indeed, sir!

Thistle. Before I could make her my bride, death blighted the fragile flower:

Emily. Distressing event!

Thistle. I loved her with all the vehemence of a first affection, I never *loved* after—I lost a wife—I lost a brother; and gradually became the half-crazed, eccentric being you have known me—with no middle course of reason, but alternately the victim of excitement or exhaustion.

Emily. Speak not thus, my dear Sir: your active benevolence has ever cheered the hearts of the wretched; and the traces of early sorrow have only tended to ensure you respect and affection.

Thistle. Affection! yes—yes. (*kisses Emily's forehead.*) Then you came, you little rogue, an unprotected orphan,—your parents died—the affairs were thrown into Chancery! a wicked pretence set up that your poor father and mother were not wedded—the misfortune of the chancel of the church being burnt, in which was the book wherein the marriage was registered—the death of all the witnesses.—You became my charge, though unconnected by the ties of relationship; but the same placid smile which had so often enraptured me whilst gazing on

her I lost, played on your lips: your beauty, your timid reliance on my protection inspired me with a father's affection for you.

Emily. Too well I know this sad recital, and that the endearing duties of filial love were denied me; but my earliest recollections are of your tender care, which can only be repaid with the gratitude of a poor orphan!

Thistle. (*wipes his eyes.*) Poor, girl? you shall be rich—rich—an heiress—ha! ha! ha! Look from the window: those hills covered with oaks are yours—you shall hold courts—grant leases—build almshouses—please the rich, and comfort the poor: all this shall be done, if money and perseverance can carry you through, (and Chancery is tight work to fight against.) Ecod! you shall be Lady of the Manor yet—ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! (*in joyous excitement.*)

Enter Servant.

Now, why did you come to stop me—something disagreeable to utter?

Servant. Mr. Snare, sir!

Thistle. Plague take him just at this time!—show him up. (*Exit Servant.*)—I'll send him off with a flea in his ear. He has called, I suppose, to apologize for the unpardonable rudeness of his wife.

Enter SNARE.

Snare. Servant Mr. Thistlebloom: I have come to you on a very unpleasant affair.

Thistle. Ah, bad enough—bad enough, sir!

Snare. But I beg you to understand that I appear only as an agent.

Thistle. It is coming out—Mrs. Snare very sorry, lost her shillings and her temper, and so forth.

Snare. May I intreat that my communication might be private? (*bowing to Emily, who is retiring.*)

Thistle. No, sir.—Come here, Emily, you shall hear what Mr. Snare has to say, and you can convey it to my sister, who is so vexed, horrified, and affronted, that she has gone to bed.—Now, sir!—What has Mrs. Snare to say for herself?

Snare. Really, I am not aware of your meaning, as regards Mrs. Snare; I have not seen my wife for the last forty-eight hours.

Thistle. No?

Snare. We country practitioners ride about in this place and t'other place, &c. &c. &c.—I have not yet been home!

Thistle. Then, what is this mysterious business?

Snare. Since you will have me speak out—my business is concerning Miss Emily—an attachment.

Thistle. An attachment, Emily?

Emily. (*aside.*) Surely, Frederick has not divulged!

Thistle. An attachment, sir—an attachment?

Snare. An attachment from the Court of Chancery, transmitted by the Sheriff of the county,—(*produces a slip of parchment.*)—that Miss Emily Travers (defendant in the Woodburn case,) be committed to the Fleet Prison forthwith, for contempt of court.

Thistle. What!

Emily. The Fleet Prison, sir?

Snare. By neglect, an answer has not been filed by your Solicitor.—Miss Emily must be prepared to accompany the officer to London, who has to deliver her to the custody of the Warden.

Emily. (*trembling and clinging to Thistlebloom.*) Oh, sir! what will become of me?

Thistle. Hark'ye, Mr. Snare! Do you know the demon in human shape, the contriver of this conspiracy? What! have you the heart to drag this innocent girl from her comfortable home to the abode of wretchedness, on the plea of some technical error?

—You may be a good country practitioner, Mr. Snare, but I think you have yet to learn a very necessary part of your profession.

Snare. What may that be, sir?

Thistle. The common law of humanity.

Snare. (*tartly.*) Remember, Mr. Thistlebloom, that I am but an agent.

Thistle. To the devil! and I hope he will pay you your commission.

Snare. Thank you, sir.—For the regularity of the business of the Court, its forms must necessarily be attended.

Thistle. Then understand me, Mr. Snare.—Emily shall not go!—I'm a county magistrate—you may get me hanged if you like—perhaps it may do me some good. You are very fond of game, sir.

Snare. Uncommonly partial to it, sir.

Thistle. Mark me:—if your catch-pole, or polecat of a sheriff's officer shows his face here,—I'll shoot him; and you may dangle him up by the heels in your larder and keep him till he is tender—a tender sheriff's officer would be a rarity.

Snare. The fact, is sir, every man has his weak point, and I own, strict attention to business is a weak point of mine.

Thistle. You are made up of nothing but weak points.

Snare. Sir, this conduct—this will be a pretty anecdote to relate at the Solicitors' Club—ha! ha!

Thistle. Solicitors' Club. Oh, you have an Attornies Club then, have ye?—it won't last long,—birds of prey are seldom gregarious.

Snare. You are becoming personal; good day, sir,—of course you must expect to hear more of this.

[*Bows, and exit.*]

Emily. No, no, my best and kindest friend, my troubles must no longer claim your generous interference.

Thistle. Pooh, pooh,—we'll have no law here! (*calls off.*) John,—Thomas,—Jenkins,—Gamekeep-

er,—load all the guns—get out the jack-hooks,—uncouple the dogs,—let loose the vicious kicking pony,—stir up the wasps' nest, and you, my dear, go upstairs, and creep into bed to my sister directly, and I will lock you in. Barricade the window. Oh, fire and fury! if we are assaulted by the whole fleet, they shan't take you. Come along, my girl; these events have driven poor Jeremy clean out of my head. (*calls off.*) John, Thomas, Gamekeeper!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Inn.*

JEREMY *discovered at a table.*

Jeremy. So, this is a pretty hour of suspense; waiting for a verdict is nothing to it; this does not depend on a point of law, but on the hasty decision of one hot head, instead of the calm deliberation of twelve. If that mad-cap sprig of the Blazoncourts had but heard me out—but he was like a rocket, the moment he was fired, off he went. I wish the young spark would as easily vanish in the air. Ah! here is my doughty O'Doggrely. (*at table.*)

Enter O'DOGGRELY.

O'Dog. (*apart.*) What plan am I to pursue? Firstly, I fear to displease Mr. Frederick; secondly, I can't forsake my legal hero, Courtington; thirdly, I should be sorry to have the sport spoiled. There he sits—looks, I think, as if he would not like to lose his life in a duel—would rather go off in a *decline*!

Jeremy. Well, Mr. O'Doggrely, any news?

O'Dog. Yes, there is; great news—(*gives Frederick's note*): look at the paper. Now I stand committed on both sides!

Jeremy. (*after reading.*) Humph! this is positive and disagreeable enough. Has Mr. Blazoncourt made arrangement with any gentleman to officiate as his second?

O'Dog. Yes, yes ; there is a gentleman.

Jeremy. Do you know the person ?

O'Dog. As well as I know myself.

Jeremy. Humph ! a countryman of yours, perhaps ?

O'Dog. Yes, born in the city of Dublin, if you can call that the country.

Jeremy. (*Aside.*) Another Irishman ! Then there's no chance of an accommodation—a couple of Kilkenny cats ! And at what hour is it proposed that the meeting should take place ?

O'Dog. At your convenience.

Jeremy. It is plaguily inconvenient to me altogether. What is the name of Mr. Blazoncourt's second ?

O'Dog. (*aside.*) What shall I say ?—O, his name—his name is Murphy.

Jeremy. Mr. Murphy ?—Friend O'Doggrely, if there was yet a probability (without infringing on the accepted laws of honour,) that I might have an opportunity of an interview with Mr. Frederick Blazoncourt, it would be of essential importance.

O'Dog. I am of opinion that every thing must go through the seconds.

Jeremy. Every thing go through the seconds ?

O'Dog. Every thing, except the bullets.

Jeremy. Suppose, then, you join the other Irish gentleman—

O'Dog. (*aside.*) Join the *other* Irish gentleman !

Jeremy. Go to Mr. Murphy, and state that, prior to the meeting, Mr. Blazoncourt *must* be made acquainted with an important fact. Where is Mr. Murphy ?

O'Dog. Oh, close by ; we are in constant communication.

Jeremy. You may say, that it is an act of justice which renders it necessary that an explanation should take place before I present myself to the fire of an adversary's pistol—that Miss Emily Travers is deeply concerned.

O'Dog. Miss Emily Travers! My gallantry forbids refusal; I'll talk to Mr Blazoncourt.

Jeremy. You? I thought every thing must go through the seconds.

O'Dog. Wait awhile, Sir, and I'll commune with Mr. Murphy; we'll lay our Irish heads together, and see the possibilities of the matter. (*aside.*) By the powers, I am a man beside myself—O'Doggrelly, the second! [*Exit.*]

Jeremy. There is now a duty to perform; I must write another brief note to my brother, in the event of my fall. (*goes to the table, writes, and reads aloud as he writes.*) “By a strange combination of circumstances, since you received my former letter, I have had the misfortune to be called out in a duel. I should have been happy to have squeezed my brother by the hand; but fate has ordained it otherwise; as I shall be, when you receive this, no longer in the land of the living. In my travelling desk, you will discover documents of great import to your ward Emily Travers. Farewell, farewell!” (*folds it.*) There—that is the second letter I have written to my family these thirty years—hope there will not be any occasion for its delivery. (*seals and directs it.*) “To Guy Thistlebloom, Esq., to be delivered immediately.”

Re-enter O'DOGGRELLY.

O'Dog. I have arranged a meeting to your satisfaction, Sir—and Mr. Blazoncourt is waiting in the Shrubbery just across the road to hear your communication—(a nice cool secluded place for a shot, where you may kill a pheasant as well as a foe). If either of you should lose your lives, it will be in a preserve.

Jeremy. Stay, sir.—It will be as well now to give you this letter, with a request that it may be delivered to Mr. Guy Thistlebloom, if it should so happen that an accident occurs to me. Be sure he has it—its

contents are of vital importance. (*gives it to O'Dog-grely.*) Come, Sir.

O'Dog. I'll take the greatest care of it. (*he puts the letter into his pocket-hole ; unseen, it drops on the Stage.*) There, now we are all secure ; you go first, sir—you are the principal, I am only the second.

[*Exeunt.*]

TAPSLY, *alarmed, peeps through a door,—comes forward.*

Tapsly. Bless my soul, bless my soul ! what have I overheard?—here is the strange gentleman going out to fight a duel with young Squire Blazoncourt !—What shall I do?—hope Mrs. Tapsly won't hear of it—she'd go into fits—Here, Ben—Ben !

Enter BEN.

Ben. Ahoy ! what cheer ?

Tapsly. Cheer, indeed ! You follow those two persons (*points off.*)—they have pistols. I fear some harm will be done—don't let them see you.

Ben. What am I to do with them ?

Tapsly. They are going to fight !

Ben. Why not let 'em fight it out ?

Tapsly. Not for the world ! you must prevent them,—run, run, my good Benjamin, after them ; stop the fighting and I will give you a china bowl full of grog,—don't let my wife know it, and in the mean time I'll scamper for the constables and beadle. [*Exit.*]

Ben. Got pistols, have they ? Well, there's grog in sight, so I'll make sale arter them—but avast ! as I'm to stop 'em, it will be as well to take my Preventive Service barking iron with me. (*pulls a large pistol out of his bosom.*) Now heave a head, my jolly boy !

[*Exit*]

(*Bell rings.*)

Snare. (*Without.*) House—Mr. Tapsly !—nobody here.

Mrs. Tapsly. (*Without.*) Mr. Tapsly—Ben—have you no ears? (*Bells ring.*)

Enter SNARE, followed by MRS TAPSLY.

Mrs. Taps. I don't know where my husband is, or where the waiters; we are all at sixes and sevens, and mourning in the house.

Snare. Oh—poor old Dame Rucket, I suppose—a great relief!

Mrs. Taps. Your commands, Mr. Snare?

Snare. Post-horses directly, and tell the boys they must drive like the devil.

Mrs. Taps. Bless you, sir, they know who they are driving. (*crosses.*) First and second pair up. [*Exit.*

Snare. What am I to do about Miss. Emily Travers? Mad old Thistlebloom would be as good as his word, and would think nothing of shooting my,—ahem!—bailiff. Old Guy contrived to awe me, and it is my interest to keep on terms with him. I dare not see Sir Bernard till the young lady is on her way to the Fleet (though we have no earthly right to send her there). I'll post over to the County Bank, and try and raise the three thousand pounds. That will be a sop for that high flying Blazoncourt dragon!—What have we here on the floor? (*picks up the Letter.*) “To Guy Thistlebloom, Esq.—to be delivered immediately.” Sometimes a secret is of importance in my profession—(*peeps into it*)—how strange! a more cunning fellow than I folded this letter up. I cannot see a single word of it.—(*turns it over in various positions.*) Nothing to be got out of this. (*peeps.*)

Re-enter MRS. TAPSLY.

Snare. Ahem—tol de rol de rol lal lal. (*affects ease.*)

Mrs. Taps. The chaise is ready, sir.

Snare. Here's a letter I picked up on your floor, directed to Mr. Guy Thistlebloom.—it is superscribed "to be delivered immediately,"—send it up, never neglect business. D'ye get any rabbits more than you know what to do with? Mrs. Snare doats on a wild rabbit smothered with onions! Open the chaise door there, and send the letter to Thistlebloom Hall.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III. *A Shrubbery.*—FREDERICK *walking about.*

Fred. I begin to suspect the courage of this Court-ington. I would not have listened to his proposal, but that the name of Emily Travers produced a talismanic effect on me. They come,—O'Doggrely alone with him—how! is he unattended by a friend?

Enter O'DOGGRELY with pistols, and JEREMY.

O'Dog. Stay you there a moment, if you please. (*Jeremy remains at the side.*) Mr. Blazoncourt, I presume to address you. (*he crosses to Frederick*) I've brought Mr. Courtington.

Fred. Where is Mr. Courtington's second?

O'Dog. He'll be here directly—one Mr. Murphy—leave me alone to settle matters with him. (*crosses to Jeremy.*) Now, are you ready to palaver?

Jeremy. Where is the other Irish gentleman, Mr. Blazoncourt's friend.

O'Dog | (*looks off.*) I see him—make yourself aisy

Jeremy. I thought you said that a surgeon was to be in attendance?

O'Dog. One of Mrs. Murgatroyd's cows kicked another cow last night,—the docter was obliged to go there.

Jeremy. But where is Mr. Murphy?

O'Dog. He's gone to look for the surgeon—whisht, man!

Fred. (impatiently) Mr. O'Doggrely, I must wave the custom on these occasions, and speak—What is the cause of this unnecessary delay?

O'Dog. The delay is—that—where the devil is Mr. Murphy, the other second?—fie upon you, Murphy?

Fred. Singular absence!—this is badly arranged.

Jeremy. Very badly indeed!

O'Dog. Gentlemen! it is quite impossible for me to say where Mr. Murphy can be at present,—he ought to be ashamed of himself—but, if you will allow me to take the privilege of a friend and wait upon both of ye—and supposing now, while I am measuring the ground, that you, Mr. Frederick, listen to what Mr. Courtington has to say—(*Apart to Frederick.*) I permit you to commune with him on the subject; and, as Murphy is absent, I'll just speak to Mr. Courtington. (*crosses to Jeremy.*) I allow you nothing derogatory to your honour, to talk to Mr. Blazoncourt. (*O'Doggrely retires.*)

Jeremy. (advances.) Sir, my blunt, perhaps coarse mode of expressing myself, fully warranted, I own, your sudden indignation; but if I had not powerful proof to back that which I then avowed, I should have richly deserved the chastisement you threatened.

Fred. Proceed, Sir. The name of Miss Travers was mentioned.

Jeremy. Tow months since, an acquaintance of mine in London, by name Mandeville, was stretched on his death-bed by a lingering and painful disorder; he sent for, and appointed me his executor. Something was weighing heavily on his mind; after a struggle, he obtained a mastery over shame, in the acknowledgement of guilt, by revealing to me, that, sixteen years previous, he had, for certain considerations, forged a document, purporting to be an avowal Of the father of Emily Travers, that his daughter was born illegitimate?

Fred. Ah! speak on, Sir.

Jeremy. He added with his dying breath, that he had obtained possession by stealth of the Parish Register recording the celebration of the marriage of the parents of Miss Travers, during an accidental fire which occurred in the chancel of the church. That record is destroyed; the poor girl is hopeless there:—one living witness alone remains, an aged servant named Winterfield.

Fred. Ah! Winterfield?

Jeremy. The forged document is still in existence, which villainous instrument has kept Emily Travers from the inheritance of her ancestors to this period?

Fred. (*Aside.*) Poor Emily!—she may still regain her rights. Where is this paper?

Jeremy. In your father's hands!

Fred. How! confusion!

Jeremy. Sir Bernard Blazoncourt, you are aware, is the claimant of the Woodburn Estate. It is the certain knowledge of the facts I have related, and my dependance on the excellent character you bear which induce me to confide this secret to you: having done my duty thus far, I am now ready to take my station, and to receive your fire.

Fred. Stay, Sir!

Jeremy. O'Doggrely—the pistols. (*O'Doggrely comes forward.*)

Fred. One moment I request, Sir.

O'Dog. (*Aside.*) Mr. Frederick does not like it now—if you please, Gentlemen—Murphy, the other second, is not arrived yet.

Fred. Be so obliging as to retire.

O'Dog. 'Faith, he won't let the seconds interfere at any rate. [*Exit.*]

Fred. Mr. Courtington, until this affair is rectified, our resentments or atonements must rest. The earnestness of your manner surprises me; your implication of my father I proudly hope to annul; but you are the friend of Miss Travers—a strict investi-

gation shall prove whether her claims are just : should they be so—(*thoughtfully.*) But time will bring to light. This way, Mr. Courtington I intrust—we must not be overheard. [*Exeunt*

Re-enter O'DOGGRELY with pistols.

O'Dog. They are a long time discussing ; I'll venture to enquire when they intend to begin business ? Eh, Bathershin—not here ? (*looks about.*) And there yonder they're walking arm in arm, as quietly as a sheep and her baa-lamb ! Well, of course they will come back in a minute, so I'll prepare and measure the ground—eight paces will be about the mark ; so—(*steps*) there, there are eight paces, and a little bit for manners—I've loaded the pretty creatures here. Let's see : here will stand Mr. B——, and here I will place Mr. C——, and Mr. O'D. will take his position here—eh, just so. (*puts himself into an attitude.*) I gracefully give the signal to fire.

BEN pops out from a bush.

Ben. Belay, belay !

O'Dog. What ! Och, murther ! we are discovered ; who are you ?

Ben. One of the preventive !

O'Dog. Go about your business, you tarpaulin-looking fellow !

Ben. I'll see you at Wapping first.

O'Dog. I'll frighten him. (*points pistol.*) My tight boy do you see this pistol ?

Ben. Yes, my tight boy. And do you see this ? (*pulls out a large pistol, and points.*)

O'Dog. Och ! we shall have a jewel after all !

Enter a BEADLE and two country CONSTABLES.

Beadle. In the King's name, down with them !

(*The Constables come behind, and seize O'Doggrely.*

Ben takes a pistol from him)

Bring him along—bring him along !

O'Dog. You clodhopping bogtrotters !

Constable. Why this be the chap that keeps the whole village in order !

Beadle. The Irish poet—we'll put him in the cage—off with him !

Omnes. Off with him ! (*Bustle—all take hold of him.*)

O'Dog. Satisfaction, you brutes ! I'm a gentleman—botheration, turf, fire and fury !—I'll pay ye, for this.

(*They carry him off ; in the struggle, he fires one of his pistols in the air.*)

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Mr. Snare's Office.*—*Enter SNARE.*

Snare. What is next on my list ?—"Spriggins *versus* Whortleberry"—"Dr. Ghast's Settlement." 'Gad, I have not a moment for myself. What with one thing and another—*post* obits and *post*-chaises, I have not set eyes on my blessed wife and family these two days ! In country practice, instead of sitting in an office, half your work must be done on horseback.

Enter CLERK.

Clerk. Mrs. Post wishes to speak to you, Sir.

Snare. Another *Post* ! Show her in.

[*Exit Clerk*

Now, what can the old lady want with me ? something about Miss Emily Travers, I suppose. Well, I must be civil, to keep in with the family.

Enter MRS. POST.

Well, my dear Mrs. Post, this *is* a favour ; you, of all persons in the world—pray be seated.

Mrs. Post. Mr. Snare, I think you have been absent from home, one or two days? I trouble you on a little private business (unconnected with my family) in which I am anxious for the advice of a discreet professional man.

(Snare brings forward a chair for Mrs. Post, and seats himself on a high office-stool)

Be good enough, Sir, to listen to my detail, and give me your candid opinion whether I have not very sufficient grounds for an action?

Snare (rubbing his hands) I am all attention, Madam.

Mrs. Post. You know the usual resource of us elderly ladies of an evening—the last new novel skimmed, scandal failing, and tea over—cards—cards are the constant relaxation from the harassing idleness of the day.

Snare. I am aware that you play an admirable rubber.

Mrs. Post. Strange to say, I am always successful, which created the envy of the Coterie with whom I spent the evening. In the present state of the affair, I shall not particularize where the insulting event took place, for which I am now by your good assistance to obtain legal redress.

Snare. One moment, Madam—allow me to make my notes. *(takes out pocket-book and pencil.)*

Mrs. Post. What will you say, Sir, to a combination of ladies determined not to admit me again to a card-table—and the principal agent of this combination has had the grossness and audacity to say that I play unfairly; nay has positively stigmatized me as a common——

Snare. What?

Mrs. Post. Cheat———a cheat!

Snare. Is it possible there exists so defamatory a character?

Mrs. Post. She does exist, and is glorying in her malice at this moment.

Snare. To use a vulgar sort of *cribbage phrase*, "We must take this lady down a peg or two;" it is a shameful business, madam. Give me full powers to carry it into Court; it is a duty, madam, you owe not only to yourself in particular, but to the card-playing public in general.

Mrs. Post. Pray, what would be the probable result of an action?

Snare. Damages—decidedly heavy damages for defamatory language.

(*Mrs. Snare peeps in at office-door.*)

Mrs. Snare. Oh, my dear, you are returned at last—engaged.—I beg pardon for breaking in on a private conversation.

Snare. I will come up directly. Stay—come here, my Eleanor.

Mrs. Snare. (*coming forward, sees Mrs. Post.*) (*aside.*) Mrs. Post here?—what does she want, I wonder?

Snare. (*to Mrs. Post*) Well thought of, madam. As in all probability we shall find it expedient to call in evidence as to your mode of playing, the testimony of my *Cara sposa*, I am sure, will be much at your service.

[*Mrs. Snare bites her lips, and shakes her head despondingly.*]

Snare. Ah, she hates the very idea of being called into court; as for me, it is my element. Now, my good Mrs. Post, I have received your instructions to draw up a case on which to found an action for defamation. (*Mrs. Snare embarrassed.*)—What's the matter, my Eleanor?—And whoever the lady may be, I pity her. (*aside.*) What is she winking at?—a backbiting, slandering, disappointed she-gamester! who, because she has lost a few shillings, darts her envenomed tongue on an innocent and virtuous victim. Pray, madam, what is the name of the defendant?—(*prepares to write.*)

Mrs. Post. Eleanor Snare!

Snare. (*dropping book.*) What!

Mrs. Post. Eleanor Snare. (*pointing.*) That good lady, sir!

Snare. What, ma'am, my—my—my—my wife?

Mrs. Post. Most assuredly! You are my attorney, sir. I trust you will do your duty,—a duty you owe not only to me in particular, but to the card-playing public in general.

Snare. Madam, I—

Mrs. Post. I cannot (by your advice) consent to hear of any accommodation; so, "to use a vulgar sort of cribbage phrase—take her down a peg or two." I wish you good day. I do not envy you your feelings, Mrs. Snare, but I hope that this lesson may amend you for the future. [*Curtsies, and exit.*]

Snare. (*walking up and down.*) Here is a pretty scrape you have got yourself and your husband into, Mrs. Snare!

Mrs. Snare. Indeed! How comes it, Mr. Snare, that you have drawn your poor wife into this predicament?

Snare. You have defamed—grossly defamed that respectable lady.

Mrs. Snare. And you, my love, have been aiding her to punish me for it—a pretty husband, truly!

Snare. This affair will spread all over the county.

Mrs. Snare. I hope it may.

Snare. I shall never hear the end of it. That Irish satirist, O'Doggrely, will get hold of it, and, worse than that, not another head of game shall we receive from Thistlebloom Hall. There is a way to stop the affair.—You must go, my dear, and humbly beg Mrs. Post's pardon.

Mrs. Snare. Mr. Snare, you know I am a determined person.—May my hair turn red, and resist the curling irons for ever, if I do!

Snare. Tell me—did Mrs. Post play unfairly? Prove that to me, my love, and I will turn the tables

the other way, and threaten her with an action—did she cheat? Say the word; bring me proof, and it shall go into court against her.

Mrs. Snare. La, Mr. Snare! how impetuous you are!

Snare. Answer me, madam: were you choused?

Mrs. Snare. No, no, no. She won all our money, and we accused her, out of spite.

Snare. We—we? Oh, then there is somebody else I can implicate?

Mrs. Snare. No, my love, I suggested it; and *we* carried into execution like women of spirit. [*Exit.*

Snare. Curse your spirit! There is no extrication from this. Now we shall have open warfare. No more temporizing—no more partridges and pheasants! I must side heart and hand with Sir Bernard; yes—(*takes out parchment writ.*)—the officer of the sheriff shall do his duty, and at any risk take Miss Emily Travers into custody. But as it is an illegal affair, it must be done cautiously. What a fortunate thing it is that I am not troubled with fine feeling. For what with my wife, and what with my practice, if I had any sensibility, I should have been by this time in a receptacle for lunatics. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—Room in the Inn.

Enter TAPSLY.

Taps. How the deuce has this duel turned out? Not a soul is come back yet, and I haven't been able to leave the house for a moment.

Enter JEREMY.

Ah, sir—very, very happy to see you at the Crown and Cushion again!

Jeremy. Thank you.—(*aside.*) I perfectly coincide with his happiness—Have you seen Mr. O'Doggrely?

Taps. No, sir; what has become of him? No harm happened to him?

Jeremy. (*aside.*) Strange where he so suddenly vanished? I thought I heard voices as if in altercation, when we left him unceremoniously; but young Blazoncourt was so interested, that we walked nearly across the Park without bestowing a thought on my excellent second. Very ungrateful of me.

Enter BEN.

Ben. Master Tapsly.

Jeremy. Oh—the rum-and-water guard—what does he want? (*walks up.*)

Ben. I want that there chaney bowl of grog!

Taps. (*apart.*) Did you prevent the fighting?

Ben. To be sure I did.

Taps. No body killed?

Ben. Devil a duck!

Taps. (*pointing to Jeremy.*) And was that the gentleman?

Ben. No; we've carried the gentleman to the cage, and nicely he is singing out. A pretty job we had to get him there!

Taps. What! is it young Squire Blazoncourt you've cooped up in the cage?

Ben. How can I tell? Cousin Mike, you, and Gubbins the beadle, are the only gentlemen I know in the place. [*Exit.*]

Jeremy. It is extraordinary I have not had any visit yet from my brother Guy. What was the answer to my letter?

Taps. Mr. Thistlebloom was violently agitated—told me to fly, and that he would bring the carriage for you—but I'll ask—Mrs. Tapsly, my dear! (*calls.*)

Enter MRS. TAPSLY.

My dear! has Mr. Guy Thistlebloom been here since the letter went over to him?

Mrs. Taps. No, my love; I sent it over by a very careful messenger.

Taps. Yes, my sweet, I took it myself.

Mrs. Taps. You? No, my darling! I tell you, I sent it.

Taps. But I'll be cursed, my dove, if I did not carry it myself!

Jeremy. Very well, very well, good people; it is not worth while having any words about it, so as the letter is delivered. Now let me have something to eat. Get me the sole now—a sole—I am fond of a sole—I feel quite faint and ill; but I shall be better after dinner. *[Exit into room.]*

Mrs. Taps. Now, Tapsly, what was the use of lying to your lawful wedded wife?

Taps. I lie, Mrs. Tapsly! If you were a man, I'd pull your nose.

Mrs. Taps. You said you carried a letter to Mr. Guy Thistlebloom, when I sent it myself by the shepherd.

Taps. Then there were two letters to go,—that is just a woman's short sightedness: I took one,—you sent another, I suppose?

Mrs. Taps. Oh! why you did not say so at first? Well, my own dear ducky, we'll go and see about the fried soles; never mind the letters—*(kisses him.)*—come!

Taps. You persuasive little witch! *[Exeunt.]*

Enter GUY THISTLEBLOOM, with a letter in his hand.

Thistle. The exterior of the house exhibits melancholy symbols of mourning—the window-shutters up—fatal duel! *(Bell tolls without.)* Ah! curse your mournful iron tongue.—*(looks at letter.)* “*I should have been happy to have squeezed my brother by the hand—*” So should I—so should I.—*(reads.)*—“*When you receive this, I shall be no longer in the land of the living—*” Oh! Jeremy, Jeremy, always headstrong, always rash! Why have you reduced me to the necessity (after thirty years' silence) to go through the last duty one man can perform to another?—how awfully silent the house is! *(bell tolls.)* Ah!

Enter BEN, with a bowl.

Bless my soul!—who is that?

Ben. Ahoy, sir! (*drinks.*)

Thistle. You are not the waiter!

Ben. No! Mike has got a holiday, so I've taken his watch.

Thistle. What does he want with *his watch*, I wonder? gone out, and afraid of being robbed, I suppose?—Though a stranger here, you are aware of the melancholy affair that has happened?

Ben. (*aside.*) He means my old aunt. (*to Thistlebloom.*) Ay, ay, Master, when our time comes, grim Death boards us—every bullet has its billet.—(*drinks*)

Thistle. Ah!—where is ... Whereabouts is the ... —(*wipes his eyes.*)

Ben. My wig, how he is affected!—take a drop.—(*offers bowl.*)—For the matter of that—if you go up aloft into the garret, you'll see the poor old creter—if so be you've a fancy that way.

Thistle. Old creature! dear me—not so old! some years younger than I am, I apprehend?

Ben. No, no—I han't heard what the age was rated on the books; but I believe its summut like fore-score and twelve!

Thistle. Impossible!—Well, show me up to the garret.

Ben. Show you up to the garret! (*aside.*)—What can he want with poor old aunt?—mayhap he is the Undertaker. I'll ax him. (*to Thistlebloom.*)—Be you come to bury the *diseased*?

Thistle. To be sure I am!

Ben. (*Aside.*) Undertaker, sure enough!—I'll send Muster Tapsly to you. [Exit.

Thistle. Poor Jeremy? we are here to-day, and gone to-morrow! I have not dared to acquaint my sister or Emily of this catastrophe! Why the deuce did he come to life again at all?

Enter TAPSLEY looking about.

Taps. Ben said the undertaker was here. (*sees Thistlebloom.*)—Bless my soul, Squire! beg pardon for not seeing you; but we are all in confusion.

Thistle. Ah! I know, I know—natural enough—with a house of mourning!

Taps. Never mind that, sir—it's nothing to us—excepting to show a little decency, or I should not have had the coffee-room shutters up.—That need not interfere with our good spirits; it was quite time for the poor old thing to hop the twig. Well, Squire—(*rubbing his hands*)—you have come over to see your long lost brother?

Thistle. How unfeeling of you, Tapsly!—Where have you put my brother?

Tapsly. He is in the next room!

Thistle. I thought he was up-stairs!

Tapsly. The chambermaid may have taken him up stairs; but I left him in No. 5.

Thistle. The chambermaid carried him up-stairs—impossible! his figure must have been much reduced in thirty years—how did he look?

Tapsly. Rather pale; but he will look better after dinner.

Thistle. What! show me instantly where he lies.

[*Going.*

Tapsly. (*stopping him.*) I need not trouble you to walk up stairs, sir; if your brother is not already down, he will be down directly.

Thistle. What—his body!

Tapsly. Yes—he has ordered his sole 'in here! (*points to room.*)

Thistle. If you are not intoxicated, Tapsly, you are the most irreverent man I ever met. I demand a direct answer. Where have you put Mr. Jeremy Thistlebloom?

Tapsly. Here, Squire, here—(*bell tolls.*)

(*Tapsly throws open folding-doors, and discovers Jeremy seated at table, with covered dishes before him—lights on the table.*)

Thist. (*Covers his face with his handkerchief, and approaches the door with his head averted—starts back.*) Jer—Jere—Jeremy!

Jeremy. (*rising with napkin.*) Guy! Guy!

Thistle. Yes—it is, it is my long lost brother—and alive! (*they rush into each other's arms.*)

Jeremy. Alive!—for thirty years I have not felt so alive as at this moment. I—I have scorned the thought and ridiculed the idea of tears in a man's eye; but I feel my heart overflowing. (*embraces Thistlebloom again.*)

Thistle. I thought you were killed in a duel—here—see your second letter to me. (*produces it.*)

Jeremy. By what accident could that have been conveyed to you? I entrusted it to O'Doggrely.

Thistle. No matter, no matter—the shock is over, you are living, that is enough; come home with me, and we never part again, till you die in earnest. (*hugs him.*)

Enter MRS. TAPSLY.

Mrs. Taps. Please your Worship, the Beadle is below—he saw your Worship's carriage at the door—it seems he has got the poor dear Irish gentleman a prisoner in the cage.

Thistle. Why have they put him there?

Mrs. Taps. For fighting a duel, I believe, your Worship.

Jeremy. (*laughs.*) My second! I suppose they have got Murphy too—ha! ha! ha!

Thistle. Tell them to bring Mr. O'Doggrely here.

[*Exit Mrs. Tapsly.*

Then you have been called out, and have risked your life?

Jeremy. Yes; but the risk was not encountered. We never had the pistols in our hands. I had a tale to tell, which quenched the fire of my antagonist—but more of this anon.

(*A noise without—O'Doggrely in altercation.*)

O'Dog. (*Without.*) I'll punish every mother's son of ye from the top to the bottom of ye.

(*Enters, with straws sticking about his person ; the Beadle following him.*)

O'Dog. I'll rhyme you for it. (*takes out book.*)

"Beadle—Wheedle—Deed ill!"

"Constable—Unstable—Dunstable!"

Bring me before your dunderheaded country justice : and I'll make him tremble in his two armed chair.

Thistle. Your servant, Mr. O'Doggrely.

O'Dog. Mr. Thistlebloom, what brings you here?

Thistle. My duty as a dunderheaded country justice—what brought you here?

Beadle. I did, your worship. (*bowing.*)

Thistle. Retire. [*Exit Beadle.*]

O'Dog. And Mr. Courtington too! Aren't you a pretty principal? forsaking your second in the hour of need!

Jeremy. Where have you been, Mr. O'Doggrely?

O'Dog. I've been confined!—been in the straw—incarcerated in the cage adjoining the pound, with two peep holes—on one side was a crowd of ragged boys jibing and jesting, and on the other were a flock of impounded pigs, and a truant donkey, braying and grunting—was this a fit situation for an Irish gentleman who put his own life in danger to serve his friend?

Jeremy. How shall I apologise?—I am very sorry. I acknowledge my want of thought.—What has become of Mr Murphy?

O'Dog. (*chuckles*) Och, murther!—Murphy was in the cage as well as myself—your hand, Mr. Courtington—it wasn't your fault!

Thistle. Courtington! is that your name, Jeremy?

Jeremy. It is my London name—but in future, O'Doggrely, you will know me as Jeremy Thistlebloom, the brother of our respected Squire, here.

O'Dog. Brother—what! are you the—

Jeremy. The ill-looking, cross-grained, caustic sort of fellow, who took himself off in a huff, thirty years ago—the same;—but hark'ye, most careful second, how came ye to' dispatch the letter? (*Thistlebloom exhibits it.*)

O'Dog. Letter—(*feels in his pocket.*) Oh! that cursed hole in my pocket!—I'll never put my money there again:—but by the powers, Mr. Jeremy! you ought not to have written that posthumous letter till after you were dead.

Jeremy. And you should have taken care it was not delivered till that time.

O'Dog. Then it would have not gone at all, you know.

Thistle. Come, come, Jeremy, to your home for life!—your re-appearance filled me with joy—ha! ha! ha!—your disappearance sunk me to the pit of despair—I wept—your revivication has now braced my spirits up again—I'm tuned up to concert pitch.—Brother, brother, don't let me down again, or it will be all over with me,—I shall be a woe-begone, miserable wretch—hey for Thistlebloom Hall! come home to the girls, to my sister and Emily come, come. (*becomes excited—and dances.*)

“Old King Cole was a jolly old soul—

Merry be the first of August,” &c. &c.

O'Dog. (*sings*) “*We wont go home'till the morning.*” [Exeunt

SCENE III.

Lawn at Thistlebloom Hall.—Open railing and gate leading to Road. Part of the House on one side.

Enter JENNY—(thoughtfully.)

Jenny. How shall I be able to tell Miss Emily,—and yet I must acquaint her—she must hear that her own true love is to be killed at once, without having it broken to her;—it will require some care though.—(*looks off.*) Miss Emily is at the window.—(*speaks off.*) Miss, Miss! please to put on your bonnet and shawl, and step down—I never was in such a quandary in my life—that is, never since my dear Dicky fell down into the well—but we got him out again: here she comes, poor thing! little suspecting what news I have for her.

Enter EMILY.

Emily. Jenny! why—why, what is the matter with the girl? speak!

Jenny. I ca'—nt, Miss,—Oh dear!

Emily. Pray, Jenny, tell me what has occurred?—how you tremble, child,!

Jenny. Oh, Miss Emily! prepare all your courage! I was down in the village at old widow Brown's—you know the old widow?

Emily. (*impatently.*) Yes, yes.

Jenny. Her son is a constable: while I was there, Mr. Tapsly came; and I overheard him give an order for the constable to go in search of Mr. Frederick Blazoncourt and another gentleman, who were gone out to fight a duel!

Emily. A duel, Jenny? what, Frederick? and have they been heard of since?

Jenny. The officers brought back Mr. O'Doggrelly in custody, as he was connected with it somehow; but Mr. Frederick and the stranger escaped their notice, and where left to battle it out in the Shrubbery!

Emily. And his life is in danger! Let me fly to prevent, to preserve him from harm, to dash away the murderous weapon levelled at his breast, and prove my devotion, my everlasting affection.

(*Snare appears with the Sheriff's Officers outside the railing.—points to Emily.*)

Emily. Yes, I am determined—Jenny let us hasten to the Shrubbery.

Jenny. Go, Miss!—why we shall hear the pistols fired off.

Emily. We may be in time to interrupt the dreadful meeting.—Come, my good girl—(*as they turn to the gate, Snare and the Officers conceal themselves*)—There is not a moment for thought—Oh! Frederick, Frederick, what false notion of honour could have prevailed on you to risk on existence which is so precious to all who know you?

SNARE and Officers re-appear.

Snare. Egad ! this is lucky—they are gone towards the Shrubby, and are unprotected—Where is the post chaise ?

Officer. Just beyond the trees, there. (*points.*)

Snare. Let Miss Travers proceed as far from this house as possible. You will arrest her—carry her into the chaise, and drive off rapidly on the London road.—Stay, we must not be observed here, run like plovers. [Excunt.

SCENE IV.—Road adjoining the Shrubby.—Enter FREDERICK, followed by WINTERFIELD and two Gamekeepers, with guns.

Fred. (*to Gamekeepers.*) Return across the Preserve to the Castle, kill a brace of pheasants, I have made a promise to Mrs. Snare.

[Excunt Gamekeepers.

—(*to Winterfield.*) Winterfield, I have dispatched the gamekeepers, that we may speak in private.—To answer my questions, you must endeavour to recall your memory.—Do you remember Colonel Travers ?

Winter. Let me see——Colonel Travers, say you ? (*shakes his head.*) No !

Fred. Ah ! (*aside*) There is a way of extricating the truth from his treacherous recollection, which I have practised with old Winterfield when I was a boy.—(*to Winterfield*) He was not married I believe.

Winter. I cannot charge my memory, whether the Colonel was married or single !

Fred. So ! (*apart*) By applying negatives, I perceive I stand the better chance of obtaining an affirmative. You never were at a wedding ?

Winter. Oh yes, sir.—I was at my own—I believe.

Fred. Pshaw ! I mean, that you never attended any other marriage ceremony than your own, in our village church ?

Winter. Yes, but I did--there was a fine to do, when the Colonel carried his lady to church.

Fred. What Colonel, my good friend?

Winter. Colonel Travers--(I told you so just now)--I remember he presented me with five guineas and a pair of white gloves, and I signed my name as a witness of the marriage in the church book.

Fred. Ah! are you positive of that?

Winter. As well as I can recollect.

Fred. Do you remember the maiden name of the lady to whom the Colonel was united?

Winter. Oh! that is quite beyond my poor head now.

Fred. It was *not* the daughter of lady Woodburn?

Winter. Why do you say she was not the daughter of Lady Woodburn; I tell you that Mrs. Colonel Travers *was* the daughter of Lady Woodburn; that she was--my memory is only bad, when in the presence of Sir Bernard--he frights it all away.

Fred. Had the Colonel and Mrs. Travers any children?

Winter. At this distance of time it is impossible for me to say.

Fred. Happy are the parents who are not childless!

Winter. But *they had* a child--a pretty little dark-haired girl!

Fred. Indeed!--then no one knew by what name that child was christened--I believe, the child was not christened?

Winter. It was though,--I saw it christened. Mrs. Colonel Travers gave me two guineas, and a half-a-dozen of Maderia, to drink the health of little Miss Emily. I ought to remember--but they are all gone--gone--the Colonel was killed in Spain. Mrs. Travers died of a broken heart, and the child I saw christened died too.

Fred. Who told you that?

Winter. Sir Bernard, Sir Bernard.--I think he said the Colonel left a natural daughter.

Fred. I will not detain you any longer, Winterfield,—but be in the way in the Castle, if I should require you to repeat that which you have now told me.

Winter. I have told you nothing; but I shall be frightened to death, if Sir Bernard is present, and forget all, he is so stern—I think I remember when he used to be a pleasanter gentleman to one than he is now. [Exit.

Fred. If it be true then, and Emily was not born illegitimate, how grievously has she been wronged of her inheritance! Yes, I will go to Sir Bernard, and insist on an immediate and public refutation of Mr. Courtington's charge! The task is heavy, but the ties of kindred, or the reverential love due even to a Father must never prevail over the sacred feelings of justice or of honor. [Exit.

Enter JENNY and EMILY.

Jenny. This—this is the Shrubbery, Miss.

Emily. Hush! speak low.

Jenny. (*apart.*) Oh, I hope they won't shoot, while we are here, the bullets may come this way.

Emily. How my heart throbs!—footsteps.—Yes, it must be Frederick and his adversary.—Jenny, enter the copse, and listen if you hear voices. (*Jenny goes up cautiously, and disappears.*) He may—he will upbraid me for this unwarrantable intrusion, but I will bear his reproaches meekly! Ah Frederick, Frederick! (*Enter the Sheriff's Officers.*) Strangers so near me!

Officer. Sarvant, young lady! your name is Miss Emily Travers?

Emily. It is.—Pray have you seen young Mr. Blazoncourt in your way?

Officer. No, Miss, he is not in *my way*; I have a little bit of business with you, if you please. Miss Emily Travers, you are my prisoner, and must go with me to London to the Fleet, by virtue of this attachment. (*produces it.*)

Emily. Mercy!—Impossible—and at such a moment! unhand me fellow! (*Two distinct reports of fire-arms without. Emily shrieks, and falls in an attitude of prayer.*) Oh! horrible, they have discharged their pistols. Frederick is wounded, perhaps killed—Oh, moment of agony!—

Re-enter JENNY, running.

Jenny. Oh Miss, did you hear the two gentlemen fire?

Emily. Has he fallen?

Jenny. I can't say, Miss: when I heard the pistols go off, I ran back as fast as I could.

Officer. (*taking Emily by the wrist.*) Come, come, young lady, you must just step into the chaise yonder.

Emily. Nay, do not drag me, sir—Jenny hasten to the Hall, say they are carrying me off—fly!

Jenny. O Miss, I cannot leave you thus.

Emily. Your rapidity is the only chance for my safety.

Jenny. Oh, you horrid wretches!

[*Exit Jenny, hastily.*]

Officer. Come!

Emily. Stay, stay—one moment—here is money: suffer me to cross the Shrubbery, this purse is yours.

Officer. I know my business better than that—come, or I must use force, so it were best you went quietly at once. (*struggling.*)

Emily. Help! help! will no one aid the unfortunate?—I sink—I faint.

(*Frederick rushes on—throws the Officer violently from. Emily, whom he supports—she swoons in his arms.*)

Fred. Scoundrel! what means this infamous conduct?

Officer. It means that you are obstructing an officer in the performance of his duty.

Fred. Officer! Who is your employer?

Officer. The Sheriff of the county. (*approaching.*)

Fred. Dare to come near her, and I will dash you to the earth—Revive—revive, dear Emily! it is a friend supports you; fear no harm, you are safe.

Emily. Frederick — Frederick! but you are wounded!

(*Rapidly glances at him, and passes her hand over his forehead and arm.*)

Fred. Wounded, Emily!—No.

Emily. The rumour of the duel—the recent discharge of fire-arms—

Fred. The duel was happily prevented—the reports you heard just now proceeded from the guns of my gamekeepers: permit me, my dear Emily, to escort you in safety home,

Officer. This won't do, sir, this here's a rescue—the lady goes with me.—Jem, keep the gemman off.

Fred. At your peril.—I will be answerable for the appearance of Miss Travers. (*The Sheriff's Officer struggles with Frederick, when O'Doggrely enters with a cudgel and strikes him down.*)

O'Dog. There's a penn'orth of Shelalagh for you.

Enter SNARE, (at the back.)

Snare. Eh! how! here's a new case—assault and battery.

O'Dog. Another and another succeed, like their Majesties in Macbeth. “Out damned spot!”—(*drives off the other Officer—sees Snare.*) Och! stay, my dear boy—taste my stick liquorice. (*Snare runs off*) Hulloloo! Mr. Snare runs like a hare—and you my catchpole friend, never begin that of which you have never well considered the end.—(*puts his foot on the Sheriff's Officer.*) “Pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth, that I am meek and gentle,” and good-day to you.—Come Miss.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT IV.

: L. of C.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Parlour at Thistlebloom Hall.*

Enter THISTLEBLOOM and JEREMY.

Thistle. But sit down, sit still for half an hour.

Jeremy. I can't sit still at present.

Thistle. No more can I—I am all excitement—Jeremy, you are my junior; you young dog!—how dare you play your relations such a trick?—but ha! ha! ha! I am devilish glad to hold you in my arms again. (*Embraces*)

Jeremy. That is the forty-first embrace I have had within the last half hour. I have business down here too.

Thistle. Business!—a fig for business! I won't allow it. I will have nothing but a round of pleasure for the next twelvemonth—feasting and merriment. I'll portion the maids—I'll give away fat ewes and pretty spinsters—I'll marry all the men—girls, I mean—I'll go round, and kiss all the old women in the parish.

Jeremy. But still my business must be attended to.

Thistle. It shan't.

Jeremy. Then my pleasure must be attended to.

Thistle. It shall: what is it?

Jeremy. To replace the wronged Emily Travers in the inheritance of her forefathers.

Thistle. (*anxiously*) And is there a possibility?

Jeremy. No, but there is a certainty.

Thistle. (*elated*) Are you positive?

Jeremy. Sure.

Thistle. Did you ever see me jump over a table?

Jeremy. Not for these forty years.

Thistle. Here goes. (*runs, but is stopt by Jeremy.*)

Jeremy. Be cool; (*struggling and holding him*)—you'll break your limbs.

Thistle. Just let me deliver a short, quiet message out of this window.

Jeremy Well, well! (*they go to the window—Jeremy holds him*) You shall not throw yourself out, with your excitement.

Thistle. I am tranquil, placid.—What I have to say out of this window is perfectly calm and reasonable. (*vociferates loudly*) Jenkins! Whipper In! Yoicks! bring all the fox-hounds up into the drawing room.

Jeremy. Mercy on us!

Enter Mrs. Post.

Mrs. Post. Heyday! what is the meaning of this disturbance? A stange gentleman! (*curtsies formally*) Pray may I presume to enquire—?

Thistle. Yes, Miss Thistlebloom, otherwise, the Widow Post, you may enquire, and I will explain. Allow me to explain clearly—explicitly. The fact is, extraordinary affair—lapse of years—wonderful intervention—cheering occurrence,—like exhuming the dead! We'll dance all night, set the bells ringing, blaze a bonfire: for we have turned up Pam—turned up Pam—(*he pushes Jeremy towards Mrs. Post*) Pam!

Mrs. Post. Pam?

Thistle. Yes; take that young dog to your arms. What, refuse? then I will. (*hugs Jeremy.*)

Jeremy. Forty-two!

Thistle. You hard-hearted, fat old relic, here's your long-lost brother Jeremy, whom we all thought defunct; kiss him, kiss him!

Mrs. Post. Jeremy Thistlebloom! can it be! (*puts on spectacles*) It is, it is! (*they embrace—Thistlebloom hugs them both*)

Jeremy. Forty-three!

Mrs. Post. Bless me, brother Jeremy, how you are altered! you used to be uncommonly handsome.

Jeremy. I fear the law has had some effect on my countenance,

Thistle. Used to be uncommonly handsome! ha! ha! ha! We were all pretty once. I remember,

sister, when you were pretty. Don't I recollect when you resembled the picture—the portrait painted at eighteen? the hair powdered, a long waisted white satin negligee, a grey parrot on your thumb, with a cherry in its beak? Don't I remember when you were handsome? Ha! ha! ha! nothing shall ever make me melancholy again, no power on earth.

JENNY runs in.

Jenny. Oh! master, master, master!

Thistle. What now madcap?

Jenny. Miss Emily!

Thistle. What of my darling?

Jenny. She walked our—shrubbery—ill-looking man—taken her prisoner—parchment—postchaise!

Thistle. (*mournfully*) They are conveying her to the Fleet! I am a miserable old wretch again!

Jeremy. The arrest is illegal; we will punish the offenders.

Mrs. Post. But what will recompense poor Emily, for her horror and alarm? Go, brother, in pursuit.

Thistle. Yes, yes—I was absorbed—Jenkins—saddle Thunderbolt, give me my horse pistols—Miss Emily is kidnapped. Oh, ho! oh, ho! yoicks!

[*Exit, running.*]

Mrs. Post. This dear and amiable girl is the victim of vicissitude!

Jeremy. Her anxieties will not be of long duration. A few days shall replace her father's estate in her possession, and a few days, if she objects not, shall unite her to the man of her heart.

Thistle. (*without*) Yoicks, yoicks, yoicks!

Voices. (*without*) Huzza, huzza!—Miss Emily—huzza!

Enter THISTLEBLOOM, in high glee, leading on EMILY.

Thistle. She is recovered; her gallant deliverer placed her in my hands, and has returned to the Castle to avoid our thanks. Frederick is a noble fellow.

Emily. Yes, he is indeed noble,—noble in mind, generous in heart, and ever the friend to the unfortunate.

Jenny. Did Mr. Frederick rescue you, miss? (*puts her apron to her eyes*) I can't help it, I can't help it; but goodness bless him!

Thistle. Mr. Blazoncourt requests, that when Emily has recovered her late alarm, we should all go over to the Castle. There is a matter of importance immediately to be explained, and he particularly requires your assistance, Jeremy.

Jeremy. Without it, the explanation would be useless. Come, and prepare yourselves for an edifying sight. You shall see a proud sinner tremble. [*Exit.*

Thistle. My own little *portegee* returned in safety: I am again in an ecstasy of bliss. (*kisses her*) Sister, I am so rejoiced. (*kisses Mrs. Post, and puts them off, turns and looks at Jenny*) Jenny, girl, you brought the first intelligence. (*kisses Jenny*) There's a kiss for you,—and here, something more pleasant from an elderly gentleman. (*gives money, and runs off with her, singing*) "Youth's the season made for joy," &c.

SCENE THE LAST.—*Library at Blazoncourt Castle.*

SIR BERNARD *discovered at table.*—(*A box of papers.*

Sir Ber. The last fond hope of my ambition, the elevation of my son, is destroyed by his own agency. His mind is noble; it is I who am the degraded the self accused, miserable being. Policy would say, consent to Frederick's union with Emily Travers, but Pride forbids the match. (*looks at the box*) Cannot I suppress the damning fraud? (*takes out a paper*) Destroy this document, this accursed document, which has been the means of keeping the Woodburn property in the Court of Chancery so long. Once destroyed, my heart would be lighter. I'll give up my claim (such as it is) to the estate

and permit Frederick to lead Emily to the altar.—I am tempted—a secret pleasurable feeling, unknown to me for years, pervades; it is but tearing this, and—*[a knock at the door]* Ha! who is there? *(has.ily replaces the paper,)*

Fred. Your son, sir.

Sir Ber. Come in.

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. Pardon, sir, my intrusion—I am come to complain of an act of gross injustice. The zeal of your agents. I hope, has exceeded the limit of their directions—Miss Travers, already too much persecuted, has been insulted, arrested, and it appears, under your cognizance.

Sir Ber. And what right have you to interfere with a matter of legal form?

Fred. Right, I had none: but I rescued her from the hands of the ruffian who was employed.

Sir Ber. How dared you to——

Fred. Circumstances, sir, have made me acquainted with certain facts——

Sir Ber. Which you have confided to your worthy Irish associate.

Fred. Never.—Forgive me, father, for pressing the matter deeply—your honour—the honour of the family demands an immediate and strict investigation of your claims to the Woodburn Estate?

Sir Ber. My pride forbids dictation, Sir.

Fred. My confidence in your rectitude has induced me to anticipate you in proposing proudly to vindicate your character, and I have promised that, in the presence of the Thistlebloom family, you will permit a document in your possession (signed by the late Colonel Travers) to be examined.

Sir Ber. Ha!

Fred. I have appointed Mr. Thistlebloom, Miss Travers, and a legal friend to meet me here.

Sir Ber. You have been hasty, sir.

Fred. The more rapidly a spot is erased, the less likely is it to leave a stain.

Sir Ber. I will meet them—confront me with my accusers!

Fred. To prove yourself triumphant, my father! I will introduce them now. [Exit.

Sir Ber. The paper has passed the scrutiny of an open court—is recorded as a valid instrument—oblivion has sealed the mouths of the witnesses of the marriage—I am secure—proudly secure—they come!

Re-enter FREDERICK, leading EMILY, THISTLEBLOOM, MRS. POST, and JEREMY.

(*Sir Bernard bows coldly.*)

Thistle. Your servant, Sir Bernard, your servant!—it is many a year since I have been under your roof.—My sister, sir, (*introducing*)—a little the worse for wear—my ward, Miss Emily Travers—and this is my brother, Mr. Jeremy Thistlebloom.

Sir Ber. Your delicacy, I think, should have excused Miss Travers' presence in the elucidation of a matter which cannot fail to be perplexing to her feelings.

Fred. Miss Travers, sir, is too deeply interested in the result of the investigation to be absent.

Sir Ber. Which I beg may instantly commence. (*calls off*) Desire Mr. Snare to attend me,

Thistle. Mr. Snare! Well, it is lucky I have brought my legal adviser with me. (*to Sir Ber*) My brother, sir, is one of the long robe and double-tailed wig tribe. Jeremy, I put the cause into your hands.

Enter SNARE, bowing—sees EMILY and MRS. POST. Is embarrassed—bows sheepishly to them, and takes his place at the table.

Jeremy. Sir Bernard, with permission, I wish to ask a question of an ancient servant of yours, by name Winterfield.

Sir Ber. Ha! (*aside*) It is safe. His memory is gone.—(*speaks off*) Let Winterfield be called. A

now, Sirs, to shorten the affair, behold that instrument.

[*Snare hands a paper from the box to Jeremy.*]

Snare. That, sir, is the document duly attested, first having been executed by the within named Godfrey Hugh Travers, declaring that his daughter Emily was not the offspring of lawful wedlock, &c. &c. &c.

Jeremy. (with a sneer) Thank you, sir, I have seen that paper before.

Enter WINTERFIELD.

Winter. (apart) Good gracious! what can they want with me? I am all in a twitter.

Snare. Mr. Winterfield is in court.

Winter. How alarming!

Jeremy. Mr. Winterfield, you were, I believe, at the wedding of Colonel Travers?

Winter. Not that I remember. I am old—my memory is crazed.

Jeremy. Come, come, my good man, you must recollect that event?

Winter. (with a vacant look) I should be happy to remember any thing,—but it is all gone here—(*touches his head*)—gone!—gone!

Fred. (aside) Confusion! How treacherous!

Snare. Hark ye, Mr. Winterfield? Do you think you should know the hand writing of Colonel Travers, if you saw it? The Colonel was in the habit of franking letters for you.

Winter. Was he!—very good of him, if he did!

Sir Ber. (sternly) Look at the signature of that paper. See if you recollect it.

Winter. (tremblingly puts on spectacles, and looks attentively) Ye—yes. I think I should say that that was the handwriting of the Colonel.

Fred. (apart) My father's honour will be cleared, but poor Emily's cause fails:—they cannot prove that she is legitimate!

Thistle. (respondingly to Mrs Post) We had bet-

ter have stopped at home, sister. Never mind, Emily, we shall ever protect you!

Sir Ber. Are your unjust suspicions now satisfied?

Jeremy. Sir Bernard, your pardon! Ladies and gentlemen, I have to apologise, and to beg that you will, for a few moments, retire to the inner library. Sir Bernard will grant me a brief private conversation. (*Sir Bernard bows.*)

[*Exeunt all but Sir Bernard and Jeremy. Snare lingers, mending a pen.*]

Jeremy. We can dispense with your attendance, Sir.

Snare. Oh!

[*Exit.*]

(*Jeremy shuts the Library door.*)

Sir Ber. How, Sir! do you not consider this evidence conclusive?

Jeremy. No—the document is forged—the signature is forgery.

Sir Ber. You will find that difficult to prove, sir.

Jeremy. You knew a person named Mandeville?

Sir Ber. (*starts*) What of Mandeville?

Jeremy. He is no more.

Sir Ber. (*aside*) I breathe again.

Jeremy. On his death-bed, he confessed to having forged this instrument—his last words are here, properly attested. (*pulls papers from his bosom.*)

Sir Ber. All—all delusive!—Mandeville lived and died a villain. I will resist this conspiracy to defraud me of my just claims to the Woodworth Estate.—If you can produce no better evidence than the ravings of a dying felon, recall your company—I hurl defiance at you—quit my house!

Jeremy. Hold, Sir Bernard! It is the admiration of the noble character of your son, that induces me not to scar his heart with your branded guilt: behold this boasted document! it may, supported by perjury, have passed as valid in a Court of Justice; but behold, sir, unless you are as blind as Justice ought to be, the written date is 1793—observe!

Sir Ber. That was the period when it was executed by Colonel Travers.

Jeremy. Sir Bernard, you avow that this instrument was written and signed in 1798 ; again look at it ;—up to the light—see—the sheet of paper itself was not manufactured until 1803 ; thanks to the woven mark, with the makers name !—What say you now, sir ?—shall I recall Mr. Snare as an evidence of this fact ?

Sir Ber. Curses !—I am ruined—do not expose me—I—I will relinquish all.

Jeremy. That I permit you to escape from other infliction than that of your own conscience, is attributable to your excellent son. I will not injure the happiness of Frederick Blazoncourt by pursuing his father with the merited rigour of justice ! You are in my power, and this document is ample proof against you. There is but one way to purchase my secrecy—immediately to consent to the union of your son to Emily Travers—and in the presence of our friends to destroy this fatal paper.

Sir Ber. I am fallen in the toil, sir.

Jeremy. A toil prepared by yourself. (*goes to the door*)—Mr. Blazoncourt, come in, sir, with your fair charge !

Enter FREDERICK, EMILY, THISTLELOOM, MRS. POST, SNARE, and O'DOGGRELY.

Ladies and Gentlemen, congratulate me ; my arguments have been unanswerable, and I have prevailed. Sir Bernard is now convinced that Miss Travers is the rightful heiress of the Woodburn property. In renouncing his claim, he destroys that obnoxious document. (*Sir Bernard tears the paper*)

Snare. What are you about, Sir ?

Jeremy. Doing the wisest thing in his power, Mr. Snare.

O'Dog. Be quiet, Snare ; its only a tear.

Jeremy. The next act of Sir Bernard's policy and good feeling will be, that, in the presence of assem-

bled friends, he gives his unqualified consent to the marriage of his son with Emily Travers.—Sir Bernard, they are worthy of each other. (*Jeremy leads them to Sir Bernard, who joins their hands.*)

Fred. This kindness is unlooked for—thanks, blessings on you, my father! (*presents Emily to Sir Bernard.*)

Thistle. Why, Jeremy, you young dog! I have been endeavouring to settle this for the last eighteen years.

Jeremy. Endeavouring—no, you have been *trying* it. I have arranged it out of Court.

Thistle. Now, if ever I am miserable again again, may I be—

Mrs. Post. (*stops his mouth*) Married!—Mr. Snare, have you commenced that little legal affair for me?

Snare. Why I *found* the defendant, Mrs. Snare, a very awkward person to deal with.

Mrs. Post. To deal with, so did I.

Sna.e. I am afraid, instead of commencing an action, I must call in the authority of the principal of the *Home* department.

Fred. Emily mine, and established in her rights! Happiness will indeed be our portion, if we should now obtain the smiles and suffrages of surrounding friends. Proof that our humble efforts have deserved commendation;—and thus ends the Chancery Suit.

O'Dog. (*taking out his book, and advancing to the Audience,*)

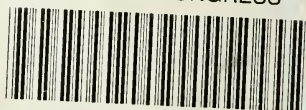
“ The Verdict given in this Cause,
I'll venture to record—with great applause.
Yes, and as we meet with no denial,
I beg to move, my Lud—ANOTHER TRIAL ”







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